

STUDY OF CHANGES IN TRADITIONAL CULTURE

EDITED BY
K. P. CHATTOPADHYAY



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UNIVERSITY OF CALCUTTA

1957

CW 6 - 100379 - 1 - 19/49
STUDY OF CHANGES IN TRADITIONAL CULTURE

[*Proceedings of Conferences held by the University
of Calcutta in Co-operation with the UNESCO*]



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R 2/-

2000年12月29日

JCV 999

19181

PRINTED IN INDIA

PRINTED BY SIBENDRANATH KANJILAL, SUPERINTENDENT,
CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY PRESS, 48, HAZRA ROAD,
BALLYGUNGE, CALCUTTA.

1932B—January, 1957—E.

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STUDY OF CHANGES IN TRADITIONAL CULTURE

[*Proceedings of Conferences on Study of Changes in Traditional Culture*]

INTRODUCTION

Early in November, 1955, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Calcutta, received an enquiry and a request from the UNESCO, whether the University would be agreeable to hold a conference or series of conferences for the study of traditional cultures in this area as affected by modern industrial developments. The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. N. K. Sidhanta, discussed the matter with some members of the teaching staff and agreed to hold the conferences. As a certain amount of work on these lines had been carried out by the Department of Anthropology of the University of Calcutta, the Vice-Chancellor requested Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay, University Professor and Head of the Department of Anthropology to act as convener of the conference. As the Science Congress had its Session early in January a date towards the end of the month was originally fixed for the first conference. It was shifted to February, to suit the convenience of the UNESCO representative. An *ad hoc* organising committee was set up by the convener, consisting of the teachers in the Department of Anthropology and Prof. N. K. Bose of the Department of Geography and Dr. N. Dattamajumdar, Director, Department of Anthropology, Government of India. Co-operation of the different departments of the University and of affiliated colleges and the learned societies in Calcutta, was solicited. Special invitations were issued to the Social Welfare and Tribal Welfare Departments of the Governments of Assam, Behar, Orissa and West Bengal and to the Universities of Viswabharati, Gauhati, Utkal, Behar and Lucknow.

The Vice-Chancellor took a keen interest in the Proceedings, and the authorities of the University sanctioned a grant to defray the expenses of publication of the proceedings. The expenses of the conference proper have been met by the UNESCO by an adequate grant.

Proceedings of the Conference for the Study of Traditional Cultures held under the auspices of the University of Calcutta, in the Department of Anthropology, Calcutta University, in co-operation with the UNESCO on the 20th February, 1956.

PRESENT :

- | | |
|--|---|
| Prof. N. K. Sidhanta, <i>Vice-Chancellor</i> , Calcutta University. | *Sri G. S. Ray, Lecturer, Department of Anthropology. |
| Dr. J. D. N. Versluys (UNESCO Director, Social Research Centre. Calcutta). | Sri S. Mukherji, Research Scholar, Govt. of India. |
| *Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay (Convener), University Professor of Anthropology, Calcutta. | Sri H. Rakshit, Research Scholar, Department of Anthropology. |
| *Dr. N. Dattamajumdar (Director, Department of Anthropology, Indian Museum). | Sri P. Bose, Demonstrator, Department of Botany. |
| Prof. F. Hsu, North Western University, U.S.A. | Dr. S. M. Sarcar, Reader, Department of Botany. |
| Prof. E. Shils, Chicago University, U.S.A. | Sri T. C. Bagchi, Demonstrator, Department of Anthropology. |
| Prof. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, Emeritus Professor, Calcutta University, and Chairman, Legislative Council, W.B. | Dr. M. Chakrabarti, Professor, Medical College. |
| Prof. D. Mukherjee, Head of the Department of Zoology, Calcutta University. | Sri Biswanath Banerji, Research Worker, |
| Dr. S. Sinha, Reader, Department of Psychology. | Sri Bikram Kesari Rai Burman, Cultural Research Institute, Government of West Bengal. |
| Dr. S. P. Roychaudhuri, Lecturer, Department of Zoology. | Sri Probodh Bhowmik, Lecturer in Anthropology, Bangabasi College, Calcutta. |
| Dr. J. L. Bhaduri, Reader, Department of Zoology. | Sri Ajitkisore Ray, Cultural Research Officer, Govt. of Orissa. |
| *Prof. N. K. Bose, Reader, Department of Geography. | Sri S. Navlakha, Research Worker. |
| *Prof. T. C. Das, Reader, Department of Anthropology. | Sm. Papia Bhattacharyya, Research Worker. |
| Dr. J. Sarma, Research Fellow, National Institute of Sciences. | Sri Jatindranath Saikia, Post-Graduate Student. |
| *Sri T. C. Raychaudhuri, Lecturer, Department of Anthropology. | Sri Amalkumar Das, Post-Graduate Student. |
| *Sri D. Sen, Lecturer, Department of Anthropology. | Sri Krishnaprasad Chatterjee, Post-Graduate Student. |
| *Dr. M. N. Basu, Lecturer, Department of Anthropology. | Sri Santibhushan Nandi, Post-Graduate Student. |
| | Sri Subratachandra Ray, Post-Graduate Student. |

Members of Organising Committee,

Sri Saktiprasad Ghorai, Post-Graduate Student.	Sri Ranajitkumar Kar, Post-Graduate Student.
Sri Bijitkrishna Das, Post-Graduate Student.	Sri Kartikchandra Sasmal, Post-Graduate Student.
Sri Hemen Banerjee, Post-Graduate Student.	Sm. Geeta Mukherjee, Post-Graduate Student.
Sri Kumarananda Chattopadhyay, Post-Graduate Student.	Sm. Savitri G. Gidwaney, Post-Graduate Student.
Sri Mahadebprasad Basu, Post-Graduate Student.	Sri Anilkumar Sengupta, Post-Graduate Student.

Some Under-Graduate students of the University Department of Anthropology also attended.

Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay: As convener of this conference I request Prof. N. K. Sidhanta, Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, to inaugurate the conference.

INAUGURAL SPEECH

PROF. N. K. SIDHANTA

Vice-Chancellor

Friends, in the document which has been sent to us by the UNESCO in connection with the organisation of the seminar, it is pointed out that at New Delhi in 1951 we raised this problem of discussion of the aims of civilised life and education and as to how the new industrial communities that are everywhere becoming more conscious of their existence are affecting the traditional cultures of the people. The General Conference of UNESCO in 1954, therefore, authorised the Director-General to organise or encourage, with the assistance of Member States and their National Commissions, studies and round-table discussions concerning the development of the cultural life of communities. Among the inquiries initiated by this resolution is a study of traditional cultures in communities of South East Asia. We are organising this seminar as part of this project to study the traditional cultures in communities of South East Asia. As some of my friends have been pointing out, what exactly is traditional culture and how are we going to study it, when the word 'culture' itself we cannot clearly define, when we do not know how many connotations of 'culture' we think of when we use the expression in our everyday conversation. I do not know whether before starting on the discussion we shall have to crystalize our ideas regarding traditional culture and the impact of modern industrial civilisation on culture. I do not know whether it is correct to use the two words 'culture' and 'civilisation' in the same sentence without being clearly and definitely conscious of the distinction between the two words. I hope to be enlightened on this point in course of the discussion. This project has assumed an important place within the programme of the UNESCO and it is suggested that each university can do a considerable amount of work for the study of traditional culture and for suggesting ways in which it can not only study these cultures but also see to what extent they have continued in spite of numerous diverse impacts from outside. After all, for the understanding of culture, we have always to see to what extent the culture continues from one genera-

tion to another generation, to what extent the descendants of a community or communities tried to mould their own habits, their own ways of life, on the basis of what they have inherited from their ancestors, by introducing whatever changes they desire or are forced to introduce on account of change in environments. These are complicated problems which we are proposing to study and we do not know how far we shall go, whether we shall be content to study only the habits and customs in general or proceed further and think of thoughts and emotions; to what extent habits mould thoughts or are moulded by thoughts; how emotions are linked with thoughts as culture proceeds from generation to generation. When we speak of thoughts and feelings, we have naturally to think of expression of thoughts. Are we going to think in terms of language when we think of emotions? We have naturally to consider the expression of the emotions in the shape of arts, music, dancing, painting. In the sphere of music, dancing, painting, we can study changes in styles, changes in forms and the nature of change of these arts from generation to generation and we can try to distinguish between the traditional forms and the present forms. Perhaps it is here that the university in its study of traditional cultures may have some definite contribution to make. Among the questions and problems which are posed in this document are the following:—

How is the traditional culture, especially the arts, literature and philosophical thought—I do not know what exactly philosophical thought means and how other kinds of thought are non-philosophical—of the community being affected by recent social changes and new intellectual interests?

What is the role of the university in these cultural activities? Are the educators aware of the new needs or demands with which the university is faced, both in its own community life and in its relation to the larger society in which the university participates?

These should make us think deeply and carefully because one of the charges which is constantly brought against our educational institutions is that they are completely isolated from life at large and live in a world of their own which is dissociated from the life of the community and which tries to protect itself by reason of high walls which cannot be penetrated by the community at large. To what extent can the university break those walls and share in the current of the life of the society, the life of the community?

Then another problem posed is what resources has the university for developing organised cultural activities for the benefit of the community in addition to its regular academic courses and studies such as musical and dramatic performances, lectures, forums, reading and discussion groups, exhibitions, cinemas, radio broadcasts? Of course, these are our so-called co-curricular activities and I find Dr. Suniti Chatterji here who has been trying to do something in this respect.

Is there a nucleus of competent persons within the university for the promotion of such activities and of the general cultural participation of the community?

What are the most important and urgent needs requiring action, first, at the local level: secondly, at the national level, and thirdly, through an international agency?

Then another problem is, how can the existing resources of personnel and material be utilised for continuing studies and discussions and undertaking practical measures for making the community aware of the problems involved and their possible solutions?

Mr. Versluys, representative of the UNESCO, will presently make some observations and he will be able to tell us to what extent the study of these questions of traditional cultures is necessary and the impact of modern industrial civilisation on them, to what extent these are intended to be studied by individuals not only at this University but at other such institutions, whether there will be any overlapping of these studies in different places, whether there is any particular channel along which this work of the seminar may be directed and whether the special contribution of this seminar may be accepted. I would not take your time any more. I shall now request Mr. Versluys to make some remarks.

SPEECH

OF

DR. J. D. N. VERSLUYS

Director, Social Research Centre, Calcutta

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I am very happy to see such a relatively small group here participating in this seminar. Sometimes I have participated in seminars which could be housed only in huge halls, and I have the feeling that it might be worth while studying to see how far the achievements of a seminar are disproportionate to the size of the hall needed to house such a group of people. I personally believe that perhaps something might be said for such a hypothesis. I feel particularly happy that this group which consists, I am sure, of people who are personally and directly interested in the problem, have come at this seminar with which UNESCO is extremely happy to co-operate. It was pointed out by the Vice-Chancellor that UNESCO has a deep interest in problems of any change of culture, changes of social and economic structure, and all other problems connected with it. It is true that it is difficult to departmentalise such a huge and important subject into any of the particular branches of the social sciences and the humanities, and therefore, UNESCO has decided to set up a Committee composed of representatives from its Departments of Education, Social Sciences and Cultural Activities, in order to discuss problems of this kind and to generalise, as Dr. Sidhan̄a has pointed out, from the information which UNESCO hopes to receive from seminars as are now being held here and will be held in other countries as well. In fact, there are six different countries, where UNESCO hopes to give co-operation to seminars or symposiums of this kind, namely, besides India, also Burma, Ceylon, Indonesia, Nepal and Pakistan.

These six countries definitely have more or less similar problems to face. In all these countries there has been very important political and social change practically in the same year. There is a very important new emphasis on the tasks of Governments on the one hand and of the people on the other to develop their countries'

economic and social structures. I would not like to say 'and cultural', because I am not too sure whether that particular aspect is felt as keenly as the other two aspects. That, particularly, is the task of the present seminar, to see how far change has occurred in what we usually call culture in the narrower sense of the term: the arts, dancing, music, literature. Here I am referring to the two meanings of culture as pointed out by Dr. Sidhanta. These particular factors form a specific part of the culture in its wider sense as it is commonly used by anthropologists, but they are the most refined and perhaps also the most fruitful part of the culture. Careful consideration is needed because here, I think, we have to face a problem. If it is true, and I think everybody agrees, that the countries of South and South East Asia want to emphasise the need for social and economic development, it is also true that then they have to pay a price for it. They may have to give up a part of their traditional culture and they may have to agree that their traditional culture will be developed along the lines of the cultures of other more developed countries. I do not think that we should just agree to the assumption that cultural values should be sacrificed to economic development. I do believe that it is the task of everybody to whom culture is precious to be careful that efforts are made for social and economic development which should be an important part in the national programme of each country, in such a way that such programmes do not go too far and would damage and change the traditional culture until it is not really recognizable any more as the culture of the countries and the people concerned. And that, I think, is particularly the problem we have in mind.

I do not know how far it is true that the change which is taking place in the countries of Asia is also, as it were, creating a new sort of international culture. Nor do I know whether an imitation of the modern painting, dancing and literature as found in western countries is a really necessary consequence of adopting some techniques from western countries in the field of production. Should we also adopt all sorts of features of other people's civilisation in order to be better able to work and to feel ourselves at home in the new social and economic set-up? It seems to me that it is a very important question and difficult too, to answer yes or no. I shall not try to reply without any further study and I think that indeed in many cases we have seen that when some changes in the field of economic and social development take place in a country, a lot was also changed in the cultural

life of the country. We have seen for instance, that dresses, particularly regional dresses, which were quite normal and common to everybody a hundred years ago, have partly or wholly disappeared from various countries in Europe. We have seen the same phenomena to a certain extent in Asian countries where European dress, I wouldn't say, was completely taken over, but to a large extent is indeed being taken over. It is perhaps not a very important thing, but nevertheless the question is asked as to why should people, because of the fact that they use a bus or tram instead of walking on foot or going on horseback, also dress in a fashion different from their own.

The fact is that there is an integral link between all the aspects of cultural life of man, and I agree again with the Vice-Chancellor that there may be some confusion because on the one hand culture in the sense of the anthropologists will include everything which has been made by man in his development as a social being in his particular place in the world, and on the other hand, culture in another connotation usually means particularly the more refined aspects of the utterances of man's thinking, feeling and emotions. The problem of the relation between culture in the first and in the second sense cannot be faced without thorough study and without particular reference to special cases, and that, I think, makes the project UNESCO has in mind more interesting.

After this seminar and after other seminars in other countries have taken place, we shall have a set of replies to the questions as pointed out by Dr. Sidhanta and as asked by UNESCO. What is really the basic problem now is how deeply are the traditional cultures, and the traditional arts particularly affected by changes in the social and economic field and, if it is a deep influence, should we encourage such a change? Or should we like to try and save the traditional cultures, and if so, should we at all be able to do so? All these problems are of very great importance, but it is definitely true that nobody would like the world to be a place of one common culture. That, I think, would really be a dreadful prospect, and I am sure that when pursuing this problem we shall keep in mind the desirability of a variety of cultures on the one hand, and on the other hand we shall remember the necessity of studying every aspect of culture since these are all inter-related. So by changing one you cannot help changing the other.

There is here a large number of very important problems, and I am extremely happy that the University of Calcutta and particularly

the Department of Anthropology of this University has been willing to make this big problem the subject of this seminar, and I wish the seminar every success.

Vice-Chancellor : Years ago when the UNESCO was heading its way towards the study of culture, at one of the earlier seminars in which I had the fortune to participate, one of the papers on which work was started was contributed by Dr. Suniti Chatterji. As he happens to be here, I shall now request him to make some observations on this subject.

DISCOURSE

OF

PROF. SUNITI KUMAR CHATTERJI

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, you have put me in a difficult position. I am not a practical anthropologist or a sociologist. I have been a professor of the science of linguistics most of my life. Linguistics is a human science, and it has two aspects, namely, physiological and psychological. The latter, by far, is the more complex and for most people forms the main aspect of linguistics, and it is connected with sociology and with anthropology and other human sciences. So from that point of view I have been taking some sort of interest in anthropology.

With regard to the subject in hand, there are certain difficulties. Of course, as the Vice-Chancellor has said, the problem which has been placed before us makes it necessary for us to ask some questions about it. The first thing I might say is that we want proper personnel in order to pursue the study of this matter; and what is the situation in India for training up proper personnel? So far as linguistics is concerned, there are only 2 universities out of the 31 in India to teach this science. These are Calcutta and Poona Universities. With regard to sociology and anthropology, there is a greater interest felt in the country, in these sciences as well as in cultural studies also. Provision for these studies has been made in 9 universities in India, and the personnel necessary for continued and sustained work is being trained by these universities. But mostly, what I should suspect, the underlining has been to economic and sociological problems, rather than to the cultural aspect of sociology. There are also some 'amateur organisations which have manifested a love for the cultural aspect of anthropology and sociology. These organisations are guided by a desire to do good to their people, and their aims and equipment are mainly literary. Thus there has been started a society in the Madhya-Bharata State, the *Loka-varta*, which brings out (or used to bring out) a journal in Hindi devoted to folklore study of some of the Western Hindi dialect areas. The study of folklore and folk literature, naturally enough, also forms a part of the linguistic and literary studies in most of the universities. Even where there are no arrangements

for proper study in linguistics or anthropology, such as, *e.g.*, in Bihar,* the Government has instituted fairly detailed survey of folk-literature in the State, and in Bihar it was done under the guidance of Mr. W. G. Archer, I.C.S., who brought out several volumes of popular literature both in the *Adivasi* or aboriginal languages like Santali, Mundari, Birhor and Oraon and in the advanced languages of the area (like Maithili and Bhojpuri).

We have also to note that in most of the universities language and literature students are permitted to prepare theses on folk literature. All this means directly or indirectly the study and registering of traditional culture.

Now one thing is to be fully realised, and it is this, that traditional culture is intimately connected with the traditional religion. There now is a tendency everywhere to do away with the traditional religion because, first of all, religion is losing its hold on the popular mind. College students come to me frequently to hear me talk to them on *Hindu Culture*, and one can see that they are ashamed to speak of *Hindu Religion*; they would much rather use the word *Culture* whatever it may mean to them. After all, what is the correct and inclusive definition of *Culture*? We have not yet been able to find out. One definition of *Culture* which has been recently proposed by Dr. S. Abid Husain of the Jamia Millia Islamia of Delhi in his "National Culture of India", is that culture means "the sense of ultimate values which a certain society has and according to which it wants to shape its life". It stands to reason that Culture should have some reference to an Ultimate Reality that is behind life: and Religion is the expression of an aspiration for that Ultimate Reality. But here we are faced with a group of ardent young men who want to talk about Culture (including what is known as Folk Culture) and eschew the question of Religion. In India after the Partition where there are hundreds of thousands of people who have been driven out of their homes, only because they followed a particular religion with its own rites and its festivals, we have to note that they are only trying against heavy odds to retain their religion which for them is their culture. The popular religion followed by the masses of the people forms the basis and background of their traditional culture. We

* There is now a Department of Anthropology and Sociology under the University—Editor.

have to think seriously how we can rehabilitate not only the refugee people of India, uprooted from the soil and from the tradition, in their religion and culture, but also of the common people of the entire country who have not suffered in their environment by being forced to be hunted out refugees. People are becoming more and more sophisticated and are moving away inevitably from their traditional culture, and that aspect of the problem too, we have to take into consideration. There was a time when we had certain forms of folk art which were practised in the family circle as part of religious or social ritual, and these used to be taught in the home and are still so taught in those families where the old traditions in life still exist. Now we are getting students, girls and boys, trained in Government and other art schools and colleges, who study folk art as a special subject, and who make pictures and designs in the beautiful "folk-art" tradition or style. But all this is just a camouflage, and this, I think, is a travesty of traditionalism. The study of our traditional way of life under the impact of these new situations leading to the Refugee or Deracine problem, and of these ideas of sophistication is a thing which is very very baffling, but necessary at the same time, and I think in this respect our Indian students as students in other parts of the world also will be able to do a great deal.

Then there is another aspect. Apart from the disruption of traditional life due to political reasons like the Partition and the growing sophistication of the people, there is also the influence of international religion. This as a disruptive factor comes from people who are very vociferous and so wield a strong influence in the community, and they want to wipe out all traces of the old traditional religion which gave both ritual and art and to bring in a complete theological and doctrinal unity and ritualistic unity, and they only seek to make the atmosphere of another culture take the place of the native one. Take the case of the Bengali Muslims. The Bengali Muslims converted from Bengali Hindus (or Buddhists), naturally have retained a great many customs even after conversion and there was no urge from within to drop them. But many ultra-orthodox religious men in the community enamoured of the rigid Quranic religion have been persistently trying to remove all vestiges of traditional Hindu culture from Muslim life on the ground that it was pre-Islamic or un-Islamic and therefore spiritually not permissible. Thus political ideas and religious ideas have both worked as destroying forces for traditional

culture. I can narrate an experience I had when I visited Java with Rabindranath Tagore in 1927. The Dutch rulers at that time just out of the cultured person's love of all things beautiful, were in the habit of encouraging the marvellous court dances of Old Java as they were practised in the royal houses at Surakarta and Jogjakarta and elsewhere. But some young Indonesian nationalists were frowning at these expressions of their own national culture because the Dutch whose rule these nationalists did not want, were supporting them. Thus this was responsible, I should say, for weaning away a number of young men, (at least for the time being) from the beautiful expression of their traditional culture. There were in addition the Muslim Divines and others who equally frowned at many traditional ways and customs as they smacked of the pre-Muslim Hindu culture. Many such people were frankly looking at these things with disfavour. We have this kind of thing also in India, as I said before, not only among zealots of the new religion, Islam or Christianity, but also among zealots of new political ideologies. But the fact remains that the masses, whether converts to new religions, or to new political ideologies the slogans of which they utter, are still largely faithful to the ways of their fathers. But a great change is coming up.

All these various factors have to be taken special note of. Then there is another important aspect which I think is interesting in the matter of linguistic study as a part of the study of traditional culture. Now, we know that the local dialects, and the popular literature in them largely represent the local traditional culture, and local forms of speech and folk literature have a great place in the traditional culture of every community. Students of English literature appreciate the value of the language and the poems of Robert Burns as an expression of the Scots spirit and culture. No one would in his admiration of Shakespeare and Milton, Browning or Shelley, belittle Burns or Scottish ballad poetry. At the present moment I have just a suspicion that in certain quarters there is a very ardent propaganda for establishing a "National Language" for India which makes a few good people look askance at an attempt to study a local dialect. This study of what they would call an "obscure speech", they would seem to think, would make people conscious of that speech. As a matter of fact, study of "dialect" and "dialect literature" has brought about occasionally very inconvenient situations so far as maintaining the position of Hindi as the "national language" of India is

concerned. For example, in Rajasthan State there is now a strong move among some people to develop the Rajasthani language (Marwari) as an independent literary language side by side with Hindi, at least as a rival within the State. I was asked myself to come to Udaipur and give some lectures from the point of view of Linguistics, and I have suggested what should be their attitude with regard to Rajasthani as a cultivated speech vis-a-vis Hindi. Some scholars of "Hindi" published Old Rajasthani texts, and when these texts came out and average educated men began to read them and appreciate them, then they began to say that if they had such a fine literature which their fathers could produce two or three centuries ago, why should they not revive it in their State? The movement is not very strong, but there is a group of people, who want Decentralisation (Vikendrikarana) and naturally those who want a paramount and exclusive place for Hindi in North India would not very much appreciate this mentality or attitude, as it was a direct result of practical interest shown in the folk literature and folk dialects of Rajasthan; that is, there is an apprehension of an incipient danger. It has not, however, shown itself to be a force which may retard work in the dialects and folk-literature; but wholehearted support for Hindi from many Hindi-using people in North India would like people not to be "dialect-conscious"—they even fondly hope that the speakers of other languages should also make Hindi their very own, allowing it to share equal honour with the mother-tongue. But I do not know how the thing is going to be done.

We are of course fully agreed that if we are to study the traditional cultures, there must be trained men who should have a realistic knowledge of the situation and also of the "Know-how" for proper scientific study. As a student of Linguistics I would also suggest that the question of language should also have proper attention paid to it. With the requisite scientific outlook which is the sine qua non for investigation and along with that, with proper training of workers, and also with the full support of the universities, we might start the work. Already in India in the universities at least there is no lack of proper scientific approach, and I believe with the interests manifested by the UNESCO in this vital matter in the life of the people, we might be able to forge ahead and do something. But we must have definite plans and schemes before us which are workable.

Dr. N. Datta-Majumdar: Mr. Chairman, from a few remarks which have been made by the President and also the previous speaker, Dr. S. K. Chatterjee, it seems to me that it would be worthwhile to start the discourses with a few introductory remarks in order to clarify the connotation of the term "Culture" which is going to occur repeatedly in the course of the discussion. At the outset, I should like to say that there is no contradiction between culture and religion. I should also like to say that culture is not identical with what we mean by the fine arts, that is, dance, music, painting and literature. Culture is something wider than all these which are but a part of culture. Culture, as understood by anthropologists and sociologists today, encompasses the total way of life of a social group. Of course, this is an abstraction from the mode of life of a particular group and covers all the activities of a social group including its habits, customs, attitudes, and value systems. From this point of view it is obvious that the term culture will also cover the philosophical ideas, as much as the economic activities and the socio-political organization of a human social group. I just wanted to emphasize this aspect and this connotation of culture. For, unless we are clear about this, it will be difficult to follow some of the discussions which we are going to have soon. I sincerely welcome the decision of the UNESCO to set up a research centre for studying the social implications of industrialization. When we are going to study the social implications, we have to study all aspects of culture and everything connected with it, such as, habits, customs, manners dresses and what not. So with these remarks I would request you to open the discussions.

Vice-Chancellor: We shall now start the discourses and I shall request Professor K. P. Chattopadhyay to talk on "Some changes in the traditional tribal cultures".

SOME CHANGES IN THE TRADITIONAL TRIBAL CULTURES

PROF. K. P. CHATTOPADHYAY

I shall try to give you some idea of the changes of traditional tribal cultures in some parts of the country. I shall not try to talk about the whole of India. Tribal villages in Chhotonagpur, Madhyāpradesh and adjoining areas and in Assam have in the past shown a remarkable unity in their social and economic organisation. Records are not, of course, available about their ancient past but we have the observations of competent observers in the past century dating back to about 150 years and we have also traditions of those people which go back still earlier. It is therefore possible to study the changes that have occurred due to the impact of modern industrial civilisation, as in this country this impact has come about only in the course of the last century in the tribal areas, although some indirect effects of it had reached earlier through effective extension of British rule in these areas. We are therefore in a position to make some evaluation of the changes. I shall confine my talk more or less to those tribes with whom I am personally acquainted. There are other friends and colleagues of mine here who are to contribute their quota to the discourse after I have finished. The Santals are one of the three largest tribal folk in India, (the others being Gond and Bhil) and are distributed over Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. One of their customs is that with the birth of a child the whole household is polluted and until purification is carried out, no one can take any food from that house. But apart from the pollution of the household, the entire village also comes under certain taboos. Until the pollution is removed, the villagers cannot perform any socio-religious festival for the village as a whole. Also the people of this village cannot join, when under pollution, in similar festivals if celebrated in other villages. Clearly the village as a whole is considered as one unit in these respects. The purification rite also emphasises this aspect. After the mother has been cleaned, she is purified by a symbolic bath by the midwife who is a Santal woman, traditionally and also actually so in some areas. The villagers also bathe, as does the father of the child. They are

shaved by a barber who is a Santal in unmodified areas. Rice-flour solution is also sprinkled on them as they assemble in the compound of the house where the child is born, starting with the Naeke, who is the sacred headman occupying socially the first position in the village. The parents are also thus sprinkled and the entire house, the compound and even the furniture are not excepted. The household has its entity recognised but as an integral part of the village community.

In the same way the unity is symbolised by the reception of the bridegroom and bride, at marriage, at each household of the village where they are ceremonially welcomed, while the essential rituals are performed at the house of the bride and groom. Here also the household, as well as the village is a definite unit. On the economic side we have a clear tradition recorded in the seventies of the last century that at an annual festival the Santals used to assemble and say, we give up all our fields and gardens to the community, retaining, as the expression goes, "only the wives and houses". On referring to the custom of the Mundas which have been recorded by S. C. Roy in the Khunti area from old men, we find that among this tribe of related culture, race and language, with common traditions, actual re-distribution of fields used to take place, even four or five generations ago if one family had grown too small to cultivate the whole of its holding, and another increased in numbers, beyond what its lands could support. In this respect, the Khasis of Assam had a similar rule. Formerly, the practice was for each family in the village to cultivate what land it could with its own manpower, since a Khasi villager would not serve as an agricultural labourer as he had no need to work on another's farm. Land left fallow by a family for several years, could be taken up by another family of that Sib or Kur in the village.

Among the Santals, there is still a tradition of the practice that in communal hunting not only the actual hunters but also those households of the village who had not been able to send a man to join in the hunt due to illness or death, got a share of the total pool. The hunter who actually killed the game got a larger share. Here again we have a clear recognition of the village unity. Similarly in fishing, in natural pools within the village boundary, each household got a share irrespective of its actual participation. Finally, I may tell you, that if a member of a Santal village committed an offence which was to be punished with outcasting, the headman of the village, symbolising its entity, remained in an humble and apologetic posture when the formal

outcasting was notified by the Santal community of the pargana or larger unit in the countryside round the village. For expiation of such a breach also, the headman had to receive the representatives of the tribe in the neighbourhood in this fashion.

Now the core of a culture consists in the way of life, as exemplified in social behaviour and economic organisation. Material culture furnishes the wherewithals of life, but here the traits may vary to some extent, without any appreciable alteration in the general way of life. Apart from the large changes that have occurred among tribal folk due to the impact of modern industrial civilisation, a steady change has been in progress over a long period due to contact with the neighbouring people of advanced culture, who were mainly Hindus, in the last century as well as earlier. This should not be overlooked.

Thus the earliest type of hut of Santals is noted in tradition as the kumba, a hemispherical structure with wall and thatch in one piece. These are still occasionally erected. Later, however, two types of huts became common, the gabled hut with rectangular ground plan, known as 'Bangla Orak', and the nearly square type with four slopes of the thatch, known as 'Catom Orak'. These types of huts are associated with certain sibs and subsibs and are also found among the culturally related Mundas with whom the Santals have many common traditions. These two types of huts are linked with certain religious beliefs so that the use of these two types of huts must be pretty old. There have been other changes also linked to the regional cultures. In Orissa, for example, like the local Hindu peasantry, the huts are set up quite often with a compound in front of the hut as well as the usual threshing floor at back. But on the West Bengal side, the blind walls of the hut face the road, standing directly on it as among the Hindu villagers. Cultivation was according to tradition, of the Dahi, *i.e.*, shifting slash and burn type. But later it changed to settled irrigated cultivation. The terms used make the borrowing from local Hindu peasants quite clear. The plough, the sickle, the heavy beam to crush clods and smooth the surface of the cultivated field, the traps for catching fish and some nets are all common to the Santals, Mundas and others and also the local Hindu peasantry. The Santals build their own huts, make the wooden parts of plough and other implements, and also weave the basketry traps. For the iron share of the plough and for the sickle they have to depend on Hindu craftsmen. For their clothes also they formerly depended on local weavers. A certain amount of spinning used to be done in the

houses. Iron workers and the weavers who served the Santal villages until recently were semitribal in their origin. In many villages, the custom was to pay them in kind, in grain, for their services, either at the end of the year or for particular jobs. This practice was common to many of the other tribal folk of this part of India.

The unity of the tribal villages as well as the economic self-sufficiency has been disrupted under modern conditions.

I shall describe to you the changes that have now occurred in these areas. At present, in the ceremonial purification at birth only some old men and women of the village attend. The barber and the midwife are now quite often Hindus following these professions. At marriage, however, the welcome of the bride and the groom is still accorded at each household. Certain post-funeral rites among Santals based on their old beliefs in life after death have begun to decay due to changes in their outlook in this matter. Among the Khasis, important post-funeral rites linked with beliefs expressing the unity of the sib have disappeared in Mawphalang area in the present generation, due to weakening of earlier beliefs in the type of life after death. It had survived in this area quite late as I had noted them. I was there again in 1951 when I found that this tradition had largely disappeared. It seems that the World War II which affected this area, had accelerated these changes. The annual hunt among Santals has disappeared in many areas due to forest regulations and deforestation and no question arises of the division of game or killed. Natural pools with plenty of fish are no longer owned by Santal villages. On the contrary, there are instances of tanks, well stocked with fish, taken on lease by a single Santal household. In such cases, fishing is by paid fishermen, who are usually not Santals, and the catch goes to the lessee. Santal villagers who come to clear the tank of weeds and beat the water however keep such small fish as they can trap or net near the banks. This is in consonance with the practice prevalent in Hindu villages.

The blacksmith who supplies the iron implements and attends to repairs in Santal Parganas and Bengal is now usually a Hindu. Quite often the tools are purchased, in the market. The thick but strong sarees made by semitribal weavers are giving way to finer mill-made clothes with varied border designs. The dress of the Santals is approximating in areas in close contact with Hindus to that of these neighbours, when the means permit of purchase of the requisite wearing

apparels. Huts are still erected by the Santals themselves but those who are well off, are found to build a low first floor like a garret, with an earthen staircase leading to it, as in two storied structures of Hindus in the uplands of Western Bengal. The annual recital of giving up of fields to the community among Santals has disappeared, although the annual festival is still held. In Khasi hills, the old apsidal house is giving way to the modern bungalow pattern gabled huts, furnished in modern style. In these hills, men's dress has changed to a Europeanised form. Here also new avenues of work, offering independence of the village community and work on the village land has made itself felt. The community land held by non-cultivating Khasis is now being leased in the village itself to other Khasis who cannot get sufficient land for themselves. Rooms in houses are also being so rented. Finally it may be stated that in some Santals villages it was observed that a few Santals had taken recourse to money and grain lending. You will realise the implication of it because this is an occupation for which the Hindu mahajan has been disliked throughout the Santal areas. The old community solidarity has largely given way to a strong feeling of individual advancement. The emphasis has shifted from the community to the individual.

The impact of modern industrial civilization has come about principally through the following avenues: Industrial civilization with its need to dispose of the large scale production of commodities, requires transport facilities and good communication all over the country. This opening up of backward areas by good roads is also needed for political reasons. The result has been not only contact with the new forces but an extension of the old Hindu influence to areas of tribal life formerly with only limited contact with the advanced neighbours. These have led to the breakdown of the old socio-economic unity of the village. The factors promoting such breakdown were already present in an incipient form in the village due to settlement of persons not of the original founder's group, on slightly disadvantageous terms. When, however, these villages became accessible to others, the surplus community reserve land was claimed by the landlord who settled his own tenants thereon. When under impact of modern conditions, old type zemindaries were sold and purchased by the newly rich individuals accustomed to deal in commodities and to purchase labour, the village unity was interfered with to a much greater extent. The idea of economic cooperation was absent among these new landlords who had

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only the profit motive. A survey carried out in the first decade of this century by McAlpin showed that proportionately there were far more intact village under the old zemindars than under moneylenders who had purchased villages or under business firms like the Midnapore Zemindary Company. It may also be noted that the settlement officers of the British Government in India discouraged recording communal rights like Khuntkatti and Bhuihari tenure. The village has been internally affected also by these changes. The sacred headman, generally the seniormost capable man of the founder's family, who held the office, traditionally by choice of the gods, lost his importance due to greater recognition of his secular deputy by Government officials and by the missionaries who generally ranked as officials in these areas. Traditional unity of the village and loyalty to its symbolic head was thereby weakened. An attempt was made in some areas by the headmen to remedy this by combining the two offices, or delegating the sacred office to a son or nephew, the senior man taking what was originally a junior post. Mission influence, it may be stated, deliberately undermined the position of the sacred headman in the interest of evangelisation.

Due to changed habits of dress and clothing, the ready availability of tools and implements of iron in the periodical markets, and also the weakening of the community feeling in the village, the old village economy as based on a kind of symbiosis with the semitribal artisans has broken down. Cash payments have in many areas replaced barter and payments in kind.

One of the most powerful factors in change has, however, been the opening up of new ways of earning a livelihood. A tribal need no longer be tied to his village and just cultivate his fields and do a certain amount of hunting and fishing. Since the last quarter of the past century it has been possible for him to work in jute mills, coal mines and tea gardens. He can sell his labour now for a living, apart from his village and tribal community. This has changed his outlook regarding his tribe. Formerly, a man who refused to conform to the community pattern of behaviour would face expulsion from the tribe, which was tantamount to social death, and involved extreme economic hardship. At present, such a person merely runs away to a mine, factory, or plantation. Such cases actually came to my notice when I visited these areas for making surveys some years ago. The possibility of setting at nought the traditional authority of the community and living a different social life has been one of the most potent forces in

changing the traditional way of life. The assumption of authority in economic matters and also such social customs as affect economic rights, by the State, has further weakened traditional authority of the community. Attempts had been made in the recent past under British rule, by the State to conserve the old authority by setting up Parganaits in certain areas of Bengal. But these proved failures as the Parganaits had not been chosen in conformity to tribal traditions. In the Santal Parganas, there was some success as selection was more carefully made. There are also tribal welfare officers. Unfortunately, the practice of law courts has been to disregard tribal custom and decide cases according to Hindu Law. This happened in undivided Bengal in the Garo area in Mymensingh. It was also observed in Mayurbhanj in Orissa and Jhargram in West Bengal. Hence, State interference has largely weakened the tribal feeling of unity of the community, instead of strengthening it. Recently work has been started by the State on different lines. Details of these projects and their effects will be discussed later by another speaker, Dr. Datta Majumdar.

It may be noted that politically the first impact of modern technological civilisation, in the middle of the last century, which brought Santals of different areas closer together, led to the growth of a feeling of Santal nationality. The Santal rising of 1855 was the expression of this outlook in protest against encroachments on their traditional rights. At present, in free India with equality guaranteed in the Constitution, we have emergence of a new feeling of love of country, as one of its folks.

Some observations may be made on what steps can be taken to help in conservation of the strong community feeling which had characterised tribal villages in the past. It has been observed that the appointment of official Parganaits by the State has proved a failure. But where Santals have had education comparable to that of their more advanced neighbours, at the level of primary education, they have given expression to the old community feeling of unity in modern ways. Thus, in Binpore Thana, where literacy is high, it was observed that they had set up a large grain gola for loan to the community on a very low rate of interest, practically just enough to cover losses due to dryage and such factors. In conferences organised by themselves, they put forward their views on their requirements of education and also their demand for recognition of their customary law very clearly and on practicable lines. Such expression of joint work on modern lines or

demands for further facilities on practical lines, were lacking in the areas of low literacy.

It is sometimes stated that tribal folk are thriftless and will not respond to economic and educational changes. Evidence has been given of the effect of education just now. For economic changes, it may be noted that a survey of the number of rooms in each household all over Santal areas in Bengal by the present writer showed that the proportion of larger and more comfortable, and of poorer huts, closely follows the distribution of holdings of cultivated fields. In other words, the Santal, when he is better off, raises his standard of living like his Hindu neighbours. There is no reason to believe that other tribals are essentially different. Hence, with the necessary allowance for their greater backwardness in the educational and economic field, planning for tribals at the local and national level should be on similar lines as for the ordinary peasantry. But some protection and also adequate recognition of their cultural forms will be essential.

DISCUSSION

Vice-Chancellor : Professor Chattopadhyay's discourse is now open to discussion. Anybody desiring to make any observations or put any questions may do so now.

Prof. T. C. Das : Mr. President and friends, it is not my purpose to discuss the discourse which has been so ably given by Prof. Chattopadhyay. I would rather like to add a few examples to it from my own experience. As a result of my acquaintance with some of the tribes of Chhotanagpur, such as the Hos, Bhumijas and Oraons and also of Manipur, where I worked amongst the Kukis and the Naga tribes of that area in the past, I desire to say something. My experience, particularly in the hill area of Manipur-Burma border dates back to 1931-1936. My remarks, therefore, relate to that period. I cannot say what developments have taken place there in the meantime. The last great war must have introduced important changes in the life of the tribal people there but unfortunately I am not acquainted with these. The culture of these tribes which I had studied corroborates what Prof. Chattopadhyay has told of the Santals, Mundas and Khasis. Among the Hos and Oraons and also among the Naga tribes, such as the Kabuis, we find similar cultural changes. We cannot, of course, go back far in time, but we can go up to, say, hundred years at least through the records left of these tribes.

Coming to the material culture of the tribes of Chhotanagpur area, we find one very important change. We see that a group of landless labourers have come into existence in this area during these hundred years or a little more. Pressure on land in the river-valleys as well as in the plains has set up movements in these areas which had their repercussions on the uplands and the hill-slopes and we find people, particularly agriculturists, going into these areas from the plains in large number during these hundred years. Somehow or other they had been able to take possession of a large slice of land, formerly owned by the tribal people there. The means which they employed are well known to the sociologists and anthropologists. Most often they used to advance loans against land which the tribal people could not repay in proper time. Taking advantage of their ignorance of the terms of payment or of the law, they were uprooted from their lands by

these money-lenders. These money-lenders went there with the agriculturists. They also imported agriculturists from their own villages in the plains and settled them in these areas to cultivate the land which they grabbed from the tribals. As a result, the tribes lost their land in large measure and we find now a days a large number of landless labourers among them. This fact has brought about certain very important changes in the whole social and economic life of the people. We find that these people, these landless labourers, generally leave their villages after the harvest when they are off-duty at home. They go to the mines, they go to the cash-crop gardens, and they go to the mills and factories. Generally these are the places where they mix with the people of advanced culture from other areas. These are the focal points where practically people from every part of India assemble and we see that here they imbibe cultural traits of other areas and of other peoples. They carry these new elements back to their own homes at the end of this career. Generally at the beginning of the agricultural season they go back to their own homes. They import not only the articles of foreign manufacture but also new ideas and new diseases. This is only a temporary type of movement but there are more permanent types of movements too. We often find that these tribals, as for example the Oraons, go to the tea gardens of Jalpaiguri and Assam and remain there for a longer period than a season and come back losing their physical and moral health. They come back sometimes with a few chips earned at these work-centres and sometimes practically without anything. These tribal labourers are a very important factor to bring about changes in the life of the tribal people of Chhotanagpur tract. But strange enough, this has not occurred, up till now, in Assam area particularly among the Naga-Kuki tribes. There, such exodus from the village, either temporary or permanent, did not occur when I was working among them.

I shall now go over to the changes which have come into the social life of the tribal people in these areas. The nature of the family, for example, has changed immensely in these areas during the last hundred years or so. Prof. Chattopadhyay has tried to show that Chhotanagpur tribes passed through a stage of shifting cultivation at one time. There are certain areas of Chhotanagpur where the tribes after giving up shifting cultivation adopted settled agriculture but they have again resorted to the old type of shifting cultivation of the past. We see that among these people there has been a great deal of change

in the form of the family. Formerly the family was a simple family consisting of the parents and children. That is not the nature of the family that we meet with in this area now. When we go amongst the Santals, Mundas, or Oraons, we find that the family has expanded and this expansion had come about with the adoption of settled agriculture. Of course, all of us know that subsistence agriculture expands the family. Our own joint-family was based on subsistence agriculture of this type. We had the joint-family on the joint-farm. The same came about amongst the Oraons. Among them the joint-family came into existence in course of the last century or even later. A number of brothers now live together with the parents and their own wives and children. We find the expanded family in the process of growth among the Old Kukis. Some of the latter tribes are now changing from shifting hill cultivation to settled agriculture in the valleys. As a result of this transitional state of the economic basis the family also is changing. The earlier simple family also is changing. The earlier simple family has changed into a more complex type including the parents and children and the latter's wives and children. This change is now going on in Assam among Naga-Kuki tribes but it is a settled fact in Chhotanagpur today. But with the adoption of labour, or rather industrial labour, by the tribal peoples of Chhotanagpur in recent years the composition of the family is again changing. It is now assuming the nature of a simple family because a large section of the tribal people is leaving their land and going to other parts of the country in search of jobs, and so there is again a setback, a change-over from the joint-family type to the family type in Chhotanagpur. It is now going on before our eyes.

Another topic which I shall deal with is the change of old barter and exchange economy into money-economy. Professor Chattopadhyay has already referred to this point in connection with the Santals. We find that payment for labour of any kind in Chhotanagpur area used to be made with paddy. Now, of course, paddy is being replaced by money. In the weekly markets too we find that local products are being sold against paddy even now. You will find vegetables, spices, and mustard oil or things like these sold against paddy but strange enough kerosene oil is never sold against paddy. It is always paid for with money. The old barter system has now been changed into exchange or into payment with money in most of the cases. We all know that the purchasing power of money varies and

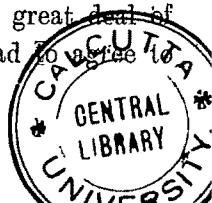
with that variation labour troubles are beginning in these areas where they had never been present before.

Coming to religion, we find that there has been some very marked change in tribal life. The old taboo-basis of society has practically disappeared. Other forces, other socio-economic forces, are playing more important parts in tribal life. In former times the tribal people used to be guided in most of their activities by the different kinds of taboos which existed among them. Prof. Chattopadhyay has already referred to this point. We also find its traces amongst the Oraons, the Bhumijas and other tribes of Chhotanagpur. These taboos have disappeared now in most of the cases but they have not been replaced by higher ideas which serve their purpose among the advanced cultures. In this respect the Christian missionaries have played important parts in tribal areas. They have broken down the old taboo-basis, but I am afraid, they have not been able to contribute anything better from their own culture to replace it. In the tribal areas of Chhotanagpur we often find that obedience to customs was enforced through taboos. If one did not conform to the social pattern, he would, it was believed, be punished by some mysterious power. If a person was found guilty of breach of incest rules, which according to the tribal people, was a very serious crime, he used to be punished very severely as it imperilled the welfare of the whole village. In old times, among the Hos, the custom was that such a person was thrown down from the hill-top. This fear of incest has gone out of existence at present and we find that it has not been replaced by anything of a higher ethical type. There are many other taboos which automatically sustained the tribal society. Their disappearance has brought about confusion in tribal life with its usual consequences. These are some of the changes which have come into the life of the tribal peoples as a result of the impact of modern civilisation.

Dr. Suniti Chatterjee : Professor Chattopadhyay, I would like to know whether you have found among the Santals any desire to study their own language. Our Government has been following a very liberal policy as regards the mother tongue and we proposed Santali to be the mother language of the Santal candidates in their matriculation examination. Now, what is the situation? I understand from some members of the Assembly whose mother tongue is Santali, that they would like very much to read literature in Santali.

Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay: I have worked in three areas where I have had some opportunities of seeing what the tribals feel about their own language. These are the Santal and other tribal areas in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the Khasi areas in Assam and the Korku area in Madhyapradesh. Where Santali is the medium of instruction for Santals or Khasi for Khasis, full advantage is taken by them of such education through their mother tongue. Similar facilities were not available in many places though it was declared by the Government of India that primary education is to be imparted to the children in their mother tongue; but unfortunately that was not followed. In Bengal where you will get many Santal students in primary schools I regret to state that the medium of instruction is Bengali and that is the reason why many are not able to go up for higher education. In Bengal the Santals are bilingual no doubt and they like Bengali literature but they also want education through the medium of their own language. In Melghat the medium is Hindi for the Korku children and there is similar trouble. In Koraput in Orissa, the medium is Oriya and except in Khasi hills the medium in Assam tribal areas is Assamese. The tribal folk resent such intrusion of languages. One other question has been asked as to what is "advanced culture". Technologically, certain cultures are more advanced in as much as the tools and implements are far more developed and help in better and greater production and on the cultural side, the fine arts, such as painting, music are more developed than the aboriginal folk art. I think 'advanced culture' has been used in that sense.

Dr. N. Datta-Majumdar: While endorsing the views of the previous speakers on the main trends of cultural change, I should like to give you only two examples illustrating how the introduction of modern conditions bring about cultural change. I am taking the case of the amount of bride-price in Santal marriage: During the second world war, as you know, there was a great deal of inflation, the purchasing power of money went down and prices of all items of goods shot up. During this time the traditional bride-price in a few Santal villages near Santiniketan also went up. The process in which it went up is very interesting. Formerly the bride-price here was only Rs. 12/-. In the year 1946 or 1947 the father of one bride demanded Rs. 14/- from the father of a groom of another village. The boy was very keen to marry that particular girl. So after a great deal of argument the father of the groom and his co-villagers had to agree to



pay this enhanced price of Rs. 14/-. Subsequently when a girl of the groom's village had to be married to a boy of another village, the father of the girl and his co-villagers too started demanding Rs. 14/- as the bride-price instead of the traditional Rs. 12/. This process went on till finally Rs. 12/- had been changed to Rs. 14/- as the new traditional bride-price.

I shall give you another example from the socio-political life of the Santal. The Santal of course, have their village community, and, during the annual hunt, there used to be a big hunting assembly forming itself into a supreme 'hunt council' in the evening. This council used to decide upon all inter-village and intra-tribal problems. But the Santal who migrated from their traditional home and settled down in the neighbouring district of Birbhum lost this institution (Hunt Council) for lack of forests. They are gradually coming closer to the neighbouring Hindu and Muslim peasants. This process was very well exemplified by the fact that when the Hindu and Muslim peasants of Birbhum organized their union, they also took in the tribal people who had been following the same agricultural procedures and practices as the Hindus and Muslims. The Santal formed a part of the general peasant movement, and thereby the former tribal isolation broke down. This process of approximation of the Santal to the neighbouring peoples has also been strengthened and reinforced by another movement which I noticed in Birbhum. That movement has been started by the Institute of Sriniketan in its attempts to organize *Brati-balaka* groups. The *Brati-Balaka* organization included the Santal youngmen of the villages adjacent to Sriniketan and Santiniketan. Every year at the time of the celebration of the anniversary of Sriniketan, processions and sporting competitions are held. through the medium of the Brati-Balaka organization the Santals also participate in this celebration. The Santals are becoming a part and parcel of the general Bengali community. These are some of the important changes which are taking place. As I have been requested by Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay to give a talk on the impact of modernization on tribal culture, I should not like to take much of your time now.

Sri Durga Mukherjee : I am not speaking on behalf of any particular social science. The point is that you have traced the effect of changes of the tribal people and the question is : Is it desirable that you should preserve the tribal form of civilisation and if so, can we at all do

it? It is undesirable that there should be one pattern of civilisation. But my idea is that can we prevent it? Changes have come and will come but just like the human appendix, can we prevent the Santali cultures from changing or should we introduce one unified culture and follow it? Various changes in human civilisation have come and will come but can we prevent such changes or is it desirable that we should prevent such changes, and whether we should make a definite effort to prevent such changes or allow things to go on.

Sri Profulla Bose: While I was listening to the paper on changes in the manners and customs and the cultural aspects of the Santhals, I was just reminded of a very old publication of a Rev. Bodding on medicinal plants of Santal tracts published by the Asiatic Society many years ago. I was wondering whether it would be possible for Professor Chattopadhyay, Head of the Anthropology Department, to allow some botanists to work on the botanical aspect of the subject. We find that many plants which are recognised by their nomenclatures here may differ from the local Santali names. They have particular specific medicinal properties which are traditionally known to the Santals. These plants and their names differ in different localities and in different environments. The Santals have no full-fledged laboratories to approach the problem more scientifically but the medicinal properties and other things are traditionally known to them and which yield very efficacious results. But those plants that are found here may have given some results but not up to the expectation which the Santals' traditional medicine can give. If it should be possible to incorporate with your study of the traditional cultures, the study of medicinal properties of the plants, I think the botanists can also come and join this seminar.

At this stage the Vice-Chancellor left, requesting the convener, Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay to take the chair.

Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay: Before I request Prof. Nirmal Bose to give his discourse, I should answer the two questions just asked. About changes and whether changes should come or not, I should say that changes are certain to come and we are bound to change over from one pattern to another to some extent at least. But the pain of change-over should be avoided as far as possible. Changes in a living community are inevitable, otherwise it will become fossilised.

About the study of medicinal plants of Santals, I think that it is the job of pharmacologists and botanists and the School of Tropical

Medicine and not of the Department of Anthropology... They can however help by collaboration and we shall be glad to cooperate.

I would now call upon Professor Nirmal Bose to talk on "Some changes in village patterns".

SOME CHANGES IN VILLAGE PATTERNS

PROF. NIRMAL BOSE

Mr. President, the subject on which we are now going to have a discourse is the changing social structure of rural India. 80 per cent of India is rural and it would be my purpose to show how the settlement pattern has been changing along with the passage of time. The outstanding fact about village structure is that in the whole of India there are three types of settlements. One is the dispersed type which we find in villages in the deltaic plain where one family builds its house and say, about a furlong away, another family builds another house and in this way there is a collection of dispersed settlements. There is one area in the Almora-Himalayas where this type of settlement is also found. Land is very precious and conditions of agriculture are also such that houses are dispersed over the whole hillside.

The second type dispersed settlement is the nucleated one in which the houses are closely packed side by side. This type is widely distributed in India. This is found in the western portion of the Gangetic plain and the reason of such wide distribution may be, firstly, shortage of land and secondly, caste segregation, so that the entire village may be divided into three or four hamlets with predominance of Brahmins in one and the Chamars or the untouchables in another. There may be similar small settlements of houses attached to the outskirts of the village of persons who happened to be there for some length of time, so that we have nucleation on a caste basis in certain regions. Now this nucleation may be of two patterns. In certain regions of India we have this nucleation or agglomération in a very peculiar manner. The settlements are sometimes lineally arranged. This linear pattern is again arranged in several ways. It may be arranged in parallel fashion or sometimes the streets may cross, being at an angle with one another.

Some of the changes through which villages are passing today may be the direct or indirect result of industrialisation, and the commercialisation of our agriculture. Now-a-days, village folks instead of purchasing their local needs locally, purchase from distant markets

so that the interlinkage which formerly existed between the different castes in the village is no more. Let us take an example. In Berar there is a village in which most of the payments for service done to the community, such as the blacksmiths and the tanners, is made by means of a share in the produce of the land. This kind of interdependence on different castes will be described tomorrow by one of the delegates from Orissa and he will tell us how this system of payment was not only done by means of a share of the grains but by an allotment of a certain piece of land for certain services. In any case, this was our old pattern in different provinces of India. The erosion of this traditional pattern has gone on very unequally. For instance, in West Bengal, in 1931 the Brahmins did not follow their caste occupation as they used to do formerly. Only about 14 per cent. of the earning members among the Brahmins were still occupied in their traditional occupation, namely 'yajñan', 'yājñan' and 'adhyāpan'. After the second world war further changes have taken place, and Brahmins are taking to occupations which were taboo to them formerly. The most important point is that this traditional interlinkage of caste has been eroded to the extent of nearly 85 per cent. in Bengal whereas the figures for Orissa are much smaller. In Orissa it is of the order of 60 per cent. This means that the erosion has been unequal. One of the most important things which a sociologist should take into account in the study of traditional cultures is the onslaught of the commercialisation of agriculture. Much work remains to be done in this field. Let me take up an interesting case from West Bengal. In Birbhum district, the Chamars have mostly become landless agriculturists. Some of them are becoming 'purified' by giving up tanning, and now claim a higher status and some of them have also been converted to Vaishnavism. This offers a good field for investigation and study of culture change in different parts of India.

There is one more thing to be noted. Not only is the interlinkage broken but also most of the caste occupations have become economically bankrupt; consequently there has been movement of population from one place to another. For instance, large-scale migration have taken place from the eastern districts of U.P., Balia, to industrial areas; where the money earned is brought back home to be invested in land. Similar things have taken place in other parts of India too. In the village Kukai in Midnapore there are two small hamlets, Saldang and Bichitrapur, inhabited by 64 people and 123

people respectively. We find three castes there. One is the Lodha, the other is the Santal and the third is the Namasudra. Each caste has its distinct role in society, but the commercialisation of agriculture has completely disrupted the traditional arrangement of castes and by and by the previous interdependence has been torn to pieces. What is happening today is that there is a strong desire in many minds to replace the old caste interdependence by a new kind of link based upon money-payments. Nearly 17 years ago some students of the Calcutta University started work on recent changes in the caste system. Among many castes, there were caste assemblies and these were carefully studied in order to find out what their annual resolutions were. In course of the last 25 years, it was discovered that those 'low' castes who had been educated and thus gained admission into the middle-class passed one type of resolution. Most of these were concerned about social reform, by means of which they tried to approximate the social practices of the Brahmins or Kshatriyas. This type of conscious change in the castes and the loyalties of the castes is a worthy field of study.

I have tried to place before you the broad outlines of change and also how different groups belonging to the upper and the lower sector are affected by various forces. You will surely admit that this forms a most interesting and useful field for sociological and cultural investigation.

DISCUSSION

Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay: I should like to point out that villages in Bengal, as Prof. Bose pointed out, have suffered a great deal from the impact of modern conditions. I am acquainted intimately with a village in Midnapore, Birsinha, which has a majority of Bagdi population who are not allowed to offer water to higher classes. A small group of Sadgops and Brahmins are also there and these three castes are the main constituents of the population there. The Sadgops who were really the founders of the village were the Mukhyas or headmen. In the village Barwari festival the first offering is by the zemindar. After him the village head of the Sadgops makes his offerings and the Brahmin comes after. This practice holds even now. As one of the representatives of a Brahmin family of the village, I can state from traditions heard that five generations ago the practice went much further. If arrangements had to be made for transport, *i.e.*, one had to arrange for a bullock cart, it was done by notifying the village headman before-hand. In marriages and other ceremonies the Sadgops had to be invited. The Bagdis also came. But unfortunately they were kept at a distance socially. Now this has changed. Nevertheless in Barwari festivals all the units participated.

Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay: Would any other member like to say anything? (There was no otherspeaker). I therefore adjourn the meeting till 11 a.m. tomorrow, the 21st instant.

*Proceedings of the Conference for the Study of Traditional Cultures
held under the auspices of the University of Calcutta in the
Department of Anthropology, Calcutta University, in co-operation
with UNESCO, on the 21st February, 1956*

(Attendance was not separately noted)

Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay: We shall now start discussions on the discourse given by Professor Nirmal Bose yesterday.

Sri D. Sen: Will Professor Bose illustrate a little further the pattern of village settlements?

Prof. Chattopadhyay: Would anyone else like to ask some other question? (There was none).

Prof. Nirmal Bose: The manner in which settlement patterns have been changing have been manifold. Let me take two or three illustrations. In certain parts of the West Punjab in Kangra valley, the original settlement patterns were established by the Punjabis who went from the plains. In such cases the houses were side by side with crooked lanes running between them. There was no order in the arrangement of the houses. That was necessary particularly in the western region of India, as the people say, for the purpose of defence. When people migrated into the Kangra valley, they carried over the old plan of village planning. Peace was established for a long while and as a result by and by the people began to spread out from their agglomerated settlements into dispersed settlements according to the needs of new forms of cultivation. One Geographer has been working of late in the Almora district on the correlation between agricultural practices and the settlement patterns, and it has been suggested by him that cultivation of different types of crops affects the patterns of settlements. Therefore the changes in the agricultural situation and changes in the political conditions of the country have led to changes in the manner in which houses are arranged in a village.

The second thing which has affected village lay-outs is the growing importance of roads in rural India. New roads are being built all over India, and bus services have also increased. Goods are carried in larger quantities by motor cars, and as a consequence where two motor roads cross, you find a new settlement of cobweb pattern.

Shops, small hotels and things of that kind are gradually built up there and as this goes on growing, as the importance of roads increases, people who live scattered in the surrounding country come nearer the road and begin to live there. This leads to an increase of linear village.

Something also takes place along with this in the economic life of the people. When a road opens up new avenues to trade, the character of cultivation also goes on slowly changing and the usual change is that people who have small holdings change over from cereal production to vegetable production because that is more paying. Wherever there is a town within say 10 or 15 miles, its influence becomes more pronounced. Moreover land which was formerly fallow or water tanks which have become half dry give place to gardens and orchards all around. People come and begin to live in these neighbourhoods and wherever there may be two or three small villages, if all of them show corresponding increase, usually they run into one another and fuse into one agglomeration.

At the same time something else also happens. This is in respect of social integration. Such integration often remains incomplete in the social sphere while it proceeds more rapidly in the physical sphere. Besides this, there is also decay at certain levels. As the roadside villages become more and more physically integrated, in the distant regions there is a corresponding decay. This decay gradually leads to the decay of big houses. For instance, in many of the old villages of Bengal, we find the houses of big zemindars and the old indigo factories completely abandoned. On the bank of the Jalangi river in the district of Nadia, there used to be big warehouses which have been practically abandoned after trade has shifted to the railway line. There are similar warehouses along the banks of Ajay and Jalangi where these abandoned warehouses give evidence of trade which was formerly principally carried on by means of country boats. These places were later connected with railways and the railways attracted large colonies of settlers near the railway station. But these warehouses remained busy during the rainy season so that the warehouses and the river boats did not lose all their utility even after the introduction of railways, and as such for the intervening space there was some need for cheaper transport which was supplied often by the boats in the rainy season. But something new is happening today in Bengal. In the same area new roads have been built and as soon as these roads come in, there is no longer such a concentration

around the railway station. With the development of motor transport the villages are prospering and village agglomeration is again taking place. At present even the distant river ports of the Jalangi can be reached by motor trucks. Under these circumstances; on the one hand the transport system and on the other the needs of industrial and commercial development are creating certain needs to which the entire settlement patterns responds. I have already illustrated yesterday from the village of Kukai, that the entire village has been turned into two or three incongruous social groups. One of these social groups looks to another for their economic and social affiliation. This is the entire situation so far as West Bengal is concerned.

This could be illustrated from the south of India and other parts of India. The point is that the rate of change of settlement is the same in different provinces. This is by way of general analysis but I cannot give you the figures.

Prof. Chattopadhyay : Any other question ?

Dr. Versluys : Do you believe that there is some loose sort of new integration? I can imagine, for instance, in cities you may have a new sort of community pattern within the trade union. I don't say it happens very often in India, but it happens in other parts of the world.

Prof. Nirmal Bose : In so far as the villages are concerned, the emergence of the new integration is a very slow process. One of the forces which is acting is the new governmental measures, affecting for instance, the village panchayet and the village union boards also. These are organizations which looked after the interests of the village. Formerly our democracy was of a different type in which units were formed not by individuals but by each of the separate caste assemblies. They sent their representatives to the territorial assembly. That kind of thing has been replaced by a thing in which the individuals elect their representatives on the basis of their affiliation to different political parties. This process of integration has not proceeded very far. As a result many of our old institutions in relation to castes have been wiped out. Joint family system still hangs on while the new organizations like the present panchayet system have been placed on top of them. Unfortunately there was some amount of carry-over from the past and the operation of the present panchayet and of the union board has been interrupted to a certain measure. For instance, in the union board's election or even in our last general election a large part was played by certain castes. In a panchayet election, people elect their representatives but

supposing somebody happens to be a zemindar of a particular caste, he naturally controls a great part of the population belonging to his own caste so that the operation of these democracies at the local level is vitiated from the top. The operation of the new integrations is corrupted by the ancient age-groups which were of an informal character.

Prof. Chattopadhyay : Before passing to the next paper I should like to say something more on Professor Bose's discourse specially in view of the question that Sri Bose has raised. He has pointed out the difficulties of integration and the lack of integration that has occurred. But sometimes it has been possible to have joint work voluntarily in villages, *e.g.*, in the course of voluntary relief operations after the famine of 1943 it was found possible to get peasants in a large area who were common sufferers, to contribute their voluntary labour for the erection of an embankment. In this way embankments were constructed near Swarupganj near about Jalangi river. The zemindars actually did not help but the people who were conscious of their difficulties gave their voluntary labour. In the same way in certain areas in Mymensingh it was possible to construct a canal for the passage of accumulated rain water. In the same way in Bankura a part of a canal was re-excavated and irrigation facilities were obtained. Again in the Abad area in Khulna district in the actual Sundarban area, embankments were raised through the voluntary labour of the peasants. All this depends on the consciousness on the part of the people and the common man. If he is really conscious of his own difficulties, then he can remove them with his own efforts, in co-operation. Education is essential to rouse their consciousness and also to build up the habit of working together through economic and political movements which also help them to come together. As a matter of fact, the very powerful non-cooperation movement helped village people to realise in part what their needs were. That is how people learn by actual work. With regard to the panchayet system, it is not yet in operation in West Bengal. The Union Board system is now in operation. The Bill has just come up before the Legislative Assembly. The whole idea of the Bill seems to be that in place of these union boards their successors the panchayets will be entrusted with the duty of looking after the health, education, sanitation and similar other necessities of the village people. I was a member of the Joint Select Committee and all the parties agreed to most of the clauses of the Bill and that was a happy sign. It has been decided that the finances of some of the more

important schemes should not be put on the people but should come from the Government revenue.

Prof. Nirmal Bose : The question is whether and how long such unity lasts. In an emergent situation like a famine sometimes people do come together but that is quite different. An emergency may create a unity, the same type of unity which was created between Russia and Germany in 1941 but such a unity does not survive for a long time.

Prof. Chattopadhyay : I shall now call upon Dr. N. Datta-Majumdar to give his discourse on the impact of modernisation on tribal culture in India.

THE IMPACT OF MODERNIZATION ON TRIBAL CULTURE IN INDIA

DR. N. DATTAMAJUMDAR

My paper on "The impact of modernization on tribal culture in India" is based on general observations and on some amount of field work in a few areas. Consequently, no attempt has been made in this paper to give a detailed analysis of the impact of modernization in any particular area. But I shall take the whole of India as a sort of canvas and try to indicate some of the main trends of the results of this impact which have been taking place in India with special reference to the tribal peoples.

The first effective cotton textile mill in India had been established in about the middle of the nineteenth century. Since then the process of industrialization of India has proceeded through many vicissitudes in spite of the attempts of the then ruling power to keep India as a producer of raw materials and a market for the manufactured goods of England. This industrialization has affected the various aspects of Indian life and culture in different degrees and brought about many changes.

One important consequence of the combined fiscal and political policy of the British Government in India has been to break down the age-old village economy of the country which formed an important economic base for the traditional caste system. The breakdown of the age-old village economy together with the growth of industrialization of the country, on the one hand and the spread of modern education, on the other, has resulted in the emergence of various socio-political movements in India and the gradual weakening of the caste structure of society. Above all, the *weltanschauung* of the educated sections of the people has been revolutionized. The various changes which had occurred in the economic, social and political life of the country and in the outlook of the people had been reflected in the strengthening of the national struggle for freedom and the final achievement of independence from foreign rule.

The processes and forces mentioned above had their impact on all sections of the Indian people, tribal as well as non-tribal. The history of the impact of the forces of modernization on the tribal peoples, like

that on the rest of the population of India, may be broadly divided into two periods, *viz.*, (i) the period of active resistance to the imposition of an alien rule and way of life, and (ii) the period of resignation to overwhelmingly superior forces based on modern science. The first period is represented by tribal revolts like the Khandh Rebellion in the second quarter, and the Santal and Bhuiyan Rebellions in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. The forceful suppression of these rebellions led to the second period of resignation to superior forces and the acceptance of many traits of alien culture.

The history of the contact of tribal peoples with the forces of modernization in India may again be divided into two different periods from another point of view, that is from the viewpoint of whether changes in culture inevitably following from contact (hostile or friendly) with alien cultures were purposive or not. The first period was marked by the introduction of many changes in tribal life and culture which cannot be regarded as purposive and well-organized. The employment of the members of the tribal groups in the manganese and dolomite quarries of Orissa, the coal mines of Asansol and Jharia, and the factories of Tatanagar will come under this category. Whether purposive or not, such employment, in mines and factories has greatly affected tribal cultures in their original habitat as well as in the settlements of the migrants. This period of non-purposive cultural change leads to the second period of purposive cultural change with the achievement of independence in 1947 and the introduction of the new Constitution of India.

The Constitution of India has incorporated in it special provisions for the tribal peoples which are bound to have far-reaching effects on tribal cultures. The Fifth and Sixth Schedules to the Constitution provide for the administration of the scheduled castes and tribes. Article 46 of the Constitution makes it obligatory for the State to "promote with special care the education and economic interest of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes", and to "protect them from social injustice and all forms of economic exploitation". Article 164 has specifically laid down that "in the States of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa there shall be a Minister in charge of Tribal Welfare". Besides the afore-mentioned provisions, the Constitution of India has also introduced universal adult suffrage which has a revolutionizing effect on the political life of the tribal peoples as on that of the others.

In accordance with the directive of the Constitution of India, many States have already set up separate departments for promoting tribal welfare, and started implementing programmes affecting the economic, social and educational aspects of tribal life. Improved methods of agriculture and new arts and crafts are being introduced. The education of tribal members at all levels is being encouraged by the opening of new schools and the grant of generous stipends. Tribal welfare centres and multipurpose co-operative societies are being established in large numbers. All these measures have been tending to change and modernize tribal life and culture.

The most comprehensive and effective factor in changing tribal life and culture has been the introduction of the Community Development Programme by the Planning Commission of the Government of India since October 2, 1952. To give an idea of the all embracing and intensive character of the community development programme, a summary of the principal activities of a typical community project block are indicated here :—

(a) Agriculture and Allied Fields :—

- (i) The reclamation of available virgin and waste lands;
- (ii) The provision of water for irrigation through canals, tubewells, surface wells, tanks, lift irrigation from rivers, lakes and pools, etc.;
- (iii) The provision of quality seeds, improved agricultural techniques, veterinary aid, improved agricultural implements, marketing and credit facilities, breeding centres for animal husbandry, soil research and manures;
- (iv) The development of inland fisheries, fruit and vegetable cultivation, arboriculture, including planting of forests and reorganisation of dietetics;
- (v) Key village schemes.

(b) Co-operative Societies.

The formation of new co-operative societies and strengthening of existing societies in order to bring every family in the area under the influence of the movement.

(c) Employment.

- (i) The encouragement of cottage, medium and small-scale industries;

- (ii) The encouragement of employment through planned distribution, trade, auxiliary and welfare service, wherever possible, on a co-operative basis.
- (d) Communications.
The provision of roads, encouragement of mechanical road transport services and development of animal transport.
- (e) Education.
The provision of compulsory and free education at the elementary stage, high and middle schools, social education and library services.
- (f) Health.
The provision of sanitation and public health measures, medical aid for the ailing, pre-natal and ante-natal care and midwifery services.
- (g) Training.
 - (i) The provision of refresher courses for improving the standard of existing artisans.
 - (ii) The training of agriculturists, extension assistants, supervisors, artisans, managerial personnel, health workers and executive officers for the projects.
- (h) Housing.
The provision of improved techniques and designs for rural housing and housing in urban areas.
- (i) Social Welfare.
 - (i) The provision of community development by utilising local talent and culture, audio-visual aid for instruction and recreation;
 - (ii) The organization of local and other sports, melas, co-operative and self-help movements.*

The Community Projects Administration has already started in the tribal areas of eleven States, namely Andhra, Assam, Bihar, Bombay, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Madhya Bharat, Vindhya Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura and N.E.F.A., 60 Community Development Blocks and 188 National Extension Service Blocks covering approximately a total

* Building for Tomorrow (Issued on behalf of the Community Projects Administration by the Publication Division of the Government of India), pp. 6-8.

population of 28,984,249 of which about 15,576,370 belong to the scheduled tribes and 13,407,879 to the scheduled castes (*See* Appendix I). The community development programme differs from the national extension work in being more comprehensive as well as intensive, and consequently more expensive. The latter concentrates on agricultural extension which is also covered by the former. It is envisaged by the Planning Commission that all national extension service blocks will, in course of time, be converted into community development blocks.

As is well known, the tribal peoples of India live in different stages of socio-cultural development. Some tribes like the Hill Chenchu, Birhor, Korua, Onge and the Jarawa live on hunting and food-collecting. But some sections of the Chenchu, *i.e.*, those who live in the lower plateaus near Hindu villages have already adopted plough cultivation as a result of their contact with the neighbouring Telugu-speaking peasants. There are other tribes like the Juang, Pauri Bhuiyan and Kandh of Orissa who depend on shifting cultivation for their livelihood. Some tribes, on the other hand, combine both shifting and permanent plough cultivation for earning a living. There is another category of tribes like the Santal, Munda, Oraon and Plains Bhuiyan who depend primarily on permanent plough cultivation. The impact of the forces of modernization on these tribes vary from category to category.

As a general rule, it may be stated that the tribal groups depending on permanent plough cultivation for their livelihood have come most under this impact, whereas hunting and foodgathering tribes like the Korua, Onge and Jarawa, who try their best to avoid contact with civilization stand on the other end of the scale and have been least affected. But the fact remains that no tribe, however, primitive its condition may be and however inaccessible its habitat may be, has succeeded in completely avoiding the influences of civilization. Even the hostile Jarawa of South Andaman Island make periodical raids on the refugee colonies at the foot of their hill range, and carry away aluminium utensils and iron implements, like handbills and axes from their victims. The Onge of Little Andaman Island have already learnt the use of safety matches and iron implements like handbills and files which are occasionally given to them as presents by the anthropological research party of the Department of Anthropology, Government of India. As a matter of fact, they are quite keen to get these items of practical utility.

As already mentioned before, the economic life of the tribes practising permanent plough cultivation have been greatly affected by the forces of modernization. Not only members of many of these tribes have left their homes for taking up employment in mines, factories and tea plantations, but the tribesmen who have been left behind in their original habitat have also begun to adopt, gradually but surely, new agricultural techniques and practices. The establishment of Community Development Blocks and National Extension Service Blocks in the tribal areas has been systematically accelerating the process of change already on foot. The dissemination of modern education among the tribal peoples has had the effect of making the newly educated tribesmen unwilling to go back to their traditional occupation. They are now becoming more anxious to secure appointments under the Government or to join the medical and other technical professions. I have come across students belonging to the Lushai, Khasi, Munda, Santal and Oraon tribes who have started thinking in terms of services under the Government. A recent survey carried out by the Madhya Pradesh Station of our Department of Anthropology also indicates the same tendency among the Gond boys who have received some amount of schooling. Even an illiterate Munda of a village in Ranchi district suggested to me in October, 1954, that at least one boy from every Munda family should be given the opportunity of receiving higher education so that he could enter some Government service and thereby supplement the meagre income of his family who might be depending on their village lands for a subsistence.

The introduction of universal adult suffrage by the Constitution of India and the adoption of the modern democratic method of election to the legislatures of the country has revolutionized the political life of the tribal as well as other peoples of India. It is true that some of the tribes were used to democratic election of village officials within narrow limits, but now the democratic basis of tribal society has been very considerably broadened and strengthened by the introduction of universal adult suffrage. During the general election of 1950, it was noticed that the tribal peoples of Orissa "instead of boycotting the elections, mustered strong at the polling booths and exercised their franchise as citizens of free India".* The political horizon of the

* Dattamajumdar Nabendu—"Aboriginal Tribes of Orissa", March of India, Nov., Dec., 1953, p. 56.

tribal peoples of India which had formerly been confined to the narrow tribal limits has now been extended to cover, if not in all cases the conception of national unity on an All-India scale, at least the conception of a federation of tribes far surpassing the former narrow tribal limits.

What has been stated above will indicate a great change not only in the socio-economico-political life of the tribal peoples, but also in their *weltanschauung*. This is specially the case with the larger tribes like the Santal, Munda, Oraon, Bhuiyan, Gond and others, who have long been accustomed to permanent plough cultivation. Even the *weltanschauung* of hunting and food gathering tribes like the Korua, Onge and Jarawa, and of the shifting cultivators like the Juang, Pauri Bhuiyan and Kandh, which remains unaffected in a relative sense, shows clear signs of a gradual but steady widening. The rapid development of communications in the country as a result of the intensification of the activities of the Community Projects Administration and the launching of various economic programmes under the Second Five Year Plan is bound to break down the pockets of isolation in the country, and make all tribes, however isolated their present condition may be, participate in the general stream of Indian national development.

The important problem in the present situation of the tribal peoples *vis-a-vis* the rest of the population of India striving hard to modernize the country under the Five Year Plans is how best to bring about the desired change without causing avoidable and unnecessary damage to the mental health of the tribal peoples involved in this vast experiment of introducing purposive change on a national level. The aim of the Five Year Plans and of the Community Projects Administration is to raise the standard of living of all sections of the population of India. But in trying to achieve this aim it should be constantly borne in mind that the standard of living is but an aspect of the life and culture of a social group, and that proper account ought to be taken of the role of culture as a whole. This caution is all the more necessary in dealing with the cases of tribal peoples, whose cultures have been used to functioning for a long time on a plane far removed from what is known as the modern way of life. There should be no attempt to frame a programme of action in the ivory tower of a central office and then to impose it on a tribal people. Such a plan unrelated to the socio-cultural context of the tribes is not only bound to be a failure, but also to cause irreparable damage to large human groups.

In other words, all tribal welfare agencies, official and non-official, should make every endeavour to formulate their programmes of action keeping in view the integral nature of the cultures of the social groups among which they plan to operate. If this is done, we can reasonably hope to achieve the goal of building up out of the diverse ethnic and cultural components one Indian nation, progressive in outlook and vigorous in action.

DISCUSSION

Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay : The subject is now open to discussion.

Prof. T. C. Das : We have heard with great interest Dr. Datta-Majumdar's discourse. The scheme which our Planning Commission has prepared for the welfare of the tribal people is certainly a very good one on paper, I should say. But its operation needs careful study, particularly how the plan has affected the tribal people. It is really a very wide topic to discuss here in detail. I shall, therefore, restrict myself to one or two fields only. We find that in five weeks more we shall complete the period of the First Five Year Plan and begin the Second Five Year Plan and it is time to take stock of what we have done during the last five years. We have, of course, spent a lot of money on tribal welfare but that is no measure of the work done. Here we shall say a few words on the educational programme undertaken according to this plan. In many parts of the tribal habitat attempts have been made to establish schools, mostly primary schools, and also hostels at different centres for the tribal students of the Secondary Schools. The syllabus for these primary schools established in tribal areas is not a very happy one. It is the very same old syllabus which we find in other parts of the country among the non-tribals. Even there, this type of syllabus has been criticised by eminent educationists as thoroughly unsuitable and this may be stated about the tribal areas too with greater emphasis. As regards hostels for tribal boys we find that in areas of greater concentration of tribals very big hostels have been built with the money provided by the Tribal Welfare Departments of the different States. In these hostels, at the beginning, they began to keep the tribal boys only. The result was that they developed a sense of exclusiveness on such separation from their non-tribal school-fellows. Consequently they could not realise the idea that they were also of the same people as other non-tribal boys living perhaps in another hostel or coming from their parental homes. This sense of separation has gone on increasing and it is found to be injurious to our national unity. We want to unite the tribals and the non-tribals into one people. At least that is what our Prime Minister has stated on various occasions and this is also the desire of our Constitution. Of

course, later on, this policy of isolation was abandoned to a certain extent when the fact was pointed out in the First Tribal Welfare Conference. We now find that about 25 per cent. of the seats in these hostels are being allotted to students from non-tribal groups.

Let us now go over to another facet of tribal life. Just like Dr. Datta-Majumdar we also found that tribal boys who are being educated in schools and colleges of non-tribal areas do not like to go back to their own ways of life after completion of this education. They aspire to have Government Service at the first instance and when it is not available, they seek for services offered by industrial organizations or business concerns or such other sources. They never think of going back to their own agricultural occupations. I am here speaking of the permanently settled agriculturist tribes. They do not want to go back to their own environment with the education which they have received in these institutions of non-tribal areas. This is a very difficult situation which needs careful consideration. But more important than this is the nature of mental orientation which has come about as a result of such education. We find that tribal boys on getting admission into schools and colleges of non-tribal areas always try to compete with the non-tribal boys in the outer aspects of the latter's culture. They adopt European dress; they prefer non-tribal food and method of cooking and like to participate in the amusements and recreations prevalent in the other strata of society. In other words, they lose respect for their own culture and soon become thoroughly detribalised. We also find that these very people, the educated tribals, give up what we call the best elements of their culture, namely, their dancing, their music, their arts and crafts. There is, further, a movement among the tribal people to give up dancing and that is being engineered by the educated tribals. They are the people who do not like that their womenfolk should mix freely with the males and go to the markets, to the fairs and festivities as they did in the past. They went to stifle female freedom which is prevalent in every tribal society. They are trying to put a stop to these healthy elements of their culture. Here lies a dangerous seed which, if allowed to grow freely, would change the colour of tribal life in course of a decade or two at the utmost. The best cultural traits of tribal life would be destroyed by the tribals themselves. Here lies the most intricate problem of tribal education. We should not isolate the tribal children from non-tribal as that would go against national unity. At the same time if tribal and non-tribal

children are educated together the former adopt more of the latter's inessential, harmful and glamorous elements of culture. How to adjust these two opposing forces? The plans forged by the Planning Commission do not hold out any solution for this problem.

There are many other facets of tribal life where opposing tendencies are operating. Hence, the purposive changes initiated by the Planning Commission should be brought about with great caution and it must be done with the advice of people who know best about the ways of the society, how the groups behave, or in other words, Government should take more help of social scientists than they are habituated to take in India. Of course, there is a show of taking such help but from personal experience I am constrained to say that such attempts are not very deep-rooted in the minds of those who are in power in the Government. We should like to have a change of vision, a change of mind in the Government in this respect before we take up this purposive change in the tribal life.

There is another point which I should mention here. The plans that have been drawn up mostly meant for settled agriculturists. Very little is being done for those who are in the shifting stage of cultivation or those who are nomadic gatherers, hunters and pastoral people. We do not find any worthy attempt to change the present miserable condition of their life. Of course, some attempt has been made in Assam to bring about changes among the shifting cultivators, but what about the food-gathering tribes and the pastorals? We must have definite plans and programmes for them as their claims deserve greater attention than the schemes for settled agriculturists, though the latter form the majority of the tribal population.

Sri B. K. Roy Burman: I am glad that Professor Das has raised the question of the Shifting Cultivators.

In this State they are very insignificant in number, and during the First Five Year Plan no special attention was given to settle them down to agriculture by plough. Recently it has been communicated to the State Government that Planning Commission has placed Rs. 32 lakhs of rupees at the disposal of the Government of India for financing some projects of special nature for the welfare of the Backward Classes in different States. The above 32 lakhs is in addition to what has been allotted in the State Plans for welfare of the Backward Classes. A very high priority has been given in these projects of special nature to the question of settlement of the shifting cultivators. As noted earlier,

shifting cultivators being very insignificant in number in West Bengal we can expect only a small fragment of the 32 lakhs of rupees allotted by the Planning Commission. But nevertheless, a scheme has been drawn up in this State for intensive development of the area inhabited by the shifting cultivators. In the borders of Bhutan there is a small tract of 3.25 square miles called Totopara. In this tract, almost isolated from the rest of the world, resides a small tribe practising shifting cultivation. They are known as Totos. The tribe consists of only 73 families and its total population is 314. More than $\frac{3}{4}$ th of their lands is covered with terai scrub, undergrowth and forest. Further the area is undulating, and strewn with pieces of stone at places. A few hill streams pass through it and flow down to the river Torsa. It is only by the sides of these streams that suitable lands are available for plough cultivation. But in recent years these better type of lands have been taken over by the Nepalis. They have introduced plough and draft cattle in the area and some of the Totos have acquired necessary skill in cultivation with plough by working alongside the Nepalis. But the Totos lack the capital to reclaim and lay out the jungle-land by terracing and contour binding for agriculture. Further they require capital for purchase of seeds, manures and fertilizers, and purchase of cattle, plough and other agricultural implements. The primitive condition of the economy and social life of the Totos has made their advancement an uphill task. It is, therefore, recognised that nothing short of a comprehensive and integrated programme of development can be expected to be fruitful in the area. In the programme drawn up by the State Government in addition to the provisions for reclamation of land and other equipments for agricultural purposes, arrangements have been made for improved housing, sanitation and spread of primary education. The problem of providing whole time work by developing subsidiary occupation such as goat rearing, pig rearing, poultry farming, weaving etc. has received due consideration in the scheme. But any number of items of welfare cannot by themselves make a project integrated one. It is only by implementing the different parts of a programme in logical sequence of their impact on the life of the community that the project as a whole becomes integrated. For instance, the project under discussion visualises setting up of a farming co-operative through which facilities for settled agriculture with plough will be extended to the Totos. It however is required to be ascertained, in what stage such large scale

co-operative organisation can be set up among them. At present Totos practise reciprocal aid in jungle clearance for shifting cultivation. But such practice does not give any opportunity to gain experience of the elaborate organisational and operational formalities that a modern co-operative society require. As such it is to be ascertained whether setting up of a farming co-operative at the very beginning of the intensive development programme to deal with the basic means of livelihood of the Totos is not likely to puzzle them into prostration before all sort of bureaucratic control and destroy the possibility of growth of their own initiative? On the other hand it may also be examined whether a programme of phased development under the farming co-operative may be organised at a later stage after some amount of experience of co-operative activity with minor items of economic life of the Totos—for instance trade in bamboo, orange etc., may not yield better result? All these however are questions of detail and now that there is a Cultural Research Institute, attached to the Tribal Welfare Department of this State, it is expected that the question of rightly phasing the different parts of the welfare programmes will receive due consideration during their implementation.

Prof. Nirmal Bose : Mr. Roy Burman has raised the question of the impact of the Five Year Plan on the tribal communities but we should be very interested in trying to find out how these people react, and also whether in the making of these plans the tribal people had any hand and also is there any area in the whole of India where the people themselves have participated in framing their own plans? Most of the plans were prepared from Delhi or Calcutta. We want to have sufficient idea of how these tribal people react to these plans. We are also interested to know how much of these plans is of their own making and how much of those in authority in Government.

Sri Roy Burman : As regards Totos, they have taken up plough cultivation. The total number of families is 73.

Prof. T. C. Das : What is the total number of shifting cultivators in West Bengal?

Sri Roy Burman : I do not know.

Prof. Nirmal Bose : On a point of information, how many in Orissa are Jhum cultivators? I have discovered that most of these so-called Jhum cultivators in one area are employed in the local municipal office and in the off-season they do some amount of cultivation. So far as the Birhors are concerned, quite recently I have carried on some

amount of investigation and I have come to the conclusion that they are not food gatherers not only now but have not been so for three generations.

Sri Roy Burman : I can speak about the Totos. During the last three years three Toto families built up terrace cultivation. They use the plough. This was subsidised by Government. During the Second Five Year Plan we are going to give them much more subsidy than under the first plan.

Prof. Nirmal Bose : On a point of information, what is the expense *per capita* on the rehabilitation of these people?

Sri Roy Burman : 150 to 200 rupees per capita; the total amount is 13 lakhs of rupees to be spread over during the second five years.

Dr. Datta-Majumdar : Prof. Nirmal Bose has raised a point of order about the programmes which are being launched by Government for tribal welfare in different areas, whether these programmes are being prepared in some office in the Secretariat in Delhi or whether the people have got any say in the matter. In answer to this point I should draw the attention of the House to one significant factor. Though the Community Projects Administration has prepared the general outline of the programme, while trying to introduce this programme among the people, they tried to ascertain the felt needs of the people and also tried to get the active participation of the people in the programme. Of course to what extent this attempt has been successful is a different matter. That has to be investigated. In connection with this I might also give some sort of an advance information that I am from my department trying to undertake investigation on a rather small scale. I want to select 3 or 4 areas at random in the different tribal areas where the community development project is being done and try to evaluate the actual schemes in operation. After that investigation, I may be able to give you the exact information in this respect.

Prof. T. C. Das : On a point of information, I raised this question of evaluation of the tribal welfare programme as operated during the last five years; I pressed that we have spent about 30 lakhs of rupees during the last three years and let us evaluate the effects of the programme but the West Bengal Government Department felt shy and I had to keep quiet.

Prof. Nirmal Bose : The information which Dr. Datta-Majumdar has just now furnished is quite news to me for the very simple reason

that in one of my meetings with the Secretary of the Planning Commission I asked as to how they arrived at certain figures, *e.g.*, 4 crores of rupees for village industries in a particular State and 400 crores for heavy industries. To this question the Secretary had no reply. My second question was how did they evaluate the success of this endeavour or in other words, what was the measure of their success. The answer was that it was their administrative technique.

Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay: I now request Dr. Miss J. Sarma, Research Fellow, National Institute of Sciences, to give her discourse on the changes in Durga Puja festival.

CHANGES IN DURGĀ PUJĀ FESTIVĀL

DR. MISS J. SARMA

The Durgā Puja in autumn is a major religious festival of the Bengali speaking people, and illustrates a significant aspect of their culture. A study of this festival reveals the patterns of relationships of the various members of the community according to the parts they play in its organisation. Although the Puja itself is sacred, fun and merriment of secular nature are associated with the festivities surrounding it.

Originally the Durgā Puja used to be celebrated by rich families in the villages and in Calcutta. During the Puja their houses were open to all persons who could come and observe the ceremony. The universal appeal of the Durgā Puja, however, gave impetus to the *barwari Puja* system where the expenses of the Puja were carried by a collective fund. Although we think it to belong to the modern age, the *barwari* system of Puja is quite old.

We find mention of it in *Hutum Penchar Naksha*, written about 100 years ago in 1862. And references are found of *Barwari Durgā Puja* in Shantipur about 150 years ago. It came to be that in areas which had no rich men the *barwari Puja* was held.

In this paper I shall compare the *barwari Durgā Puja* in the village of Bigra in 1954 with the *barwari Puja* in Calcutta. This does not mean that family Pujas are no longer of importance. They are, but families usually try to maintain their traditions, and family Pujas in the city would not deviate very much from the family Pujas in the villages. The *barwari Puja*, on the other hand, shows great contrasts.

The village of Bigra in the Burdwan district is very small with 616 persons within 118 families. The population is completely agricultural with non-cultivating owners—13.35%, owner cultivators 21.18%, share croppers 22.03%; agricultural labourers 22.85%, and persons in other occupations being 20.59%. There are only 13 castes. These and their respective numbers of families are—Bagdis 29, Bauri 1, Bostom 2, Brahmin 9, Carpenter 1, Dom 2, Ghatwal 1, Goala 24, Kayastha 9, Muchi 7, Santhal 14, Tambuli 5 and Ugra-Kshatriya 14. The castes with one or two families are insignificant in the activities

of the village. The Goalas live at a little distance, and have a tendency to stay away from the village functions. The villagers give them a low status. Among the upper castes, the Ugra-Kshatriyas, Kayasthas, and the Tambulis directly follow the Brahmans. Among the lower castes, the Bagdis are the most numerous. The Muchis are held to be of status lower than the Bagdis. The Santhals still retain their tribal distinction and stay at a little distance in a neighbourhood of their own.

The Ugra-Kshatriyas are the most well-to-do farmers in the village. Among them, members of the Samanta household have earned the reputation of being the leaders of the community. Lately the status of the Samantas is being challenged by the two Some brothers. There is often friction among them, the villagers taking one side or the other. The Samanta family has a *puja mondop* where the Samanta Durga Puja is held without an image, the deity being represented with a *ghot*. The villagers for the last seventy years have been holding *barwari* Puja with an image in the Samanta *mondop* right next to the *ghot*, as this is the most convenient place for it. The image is of the conventional type, having the five deities united with a *chalchitra*.

Formerly Durga Puja was held by the ancestors of the Bhattacharya family. The Bhattacharyas are priests in the village today. Their Puja was stopped seventy-two years ago due to financial shortcomings. Since this family was unable to perform the Puja even the following year, the villagers united to perform the *barwari* Puja with the ingredients available in the Bhattacharya household, in the Samanta *puja mondop*. Although the Puja is *barwari* it is still performed in the name of the eldest of the Bhattacharya house. For seventy years the *barwari* Puja has taken place without a break and in the same *mondop*.

Around the *mondop* is a courtyard. The *mondop* is three feet above the level of the courtyard. In the middle of the courtyard and in front of the *mondop* is the *atchala*. Only Brahmans enter the *mondop* during the three days of Puja. The place is highly sacred. The *atchala* is partially sacred. Shoes may not be worn on it when the Puja is in session. Persons of all castes, except the Bagdis and Muchis, sit there to observe the ceremony. Some of the Samanta men were seen to cut fruits there for their family Puja.

The persons within the *mondop* were four priests, two priests respectively for each of the two Pujas. All these priests resided in the

village. During the rest of the year, each of them functions as priests to particular families. One Brahman widow remained by the *barwari* Puja and helped the priests in their arrangements. A Samanta lady also helped to arrange. The other members of the community did not show interest in the ceremony of the Puja. When one of the priests ran short of flowers, some one advised that the priests should have brought the flowers with them.

The *pushpanjali* was offered by two Samanta men and one Samanta woman to their family *ghot Puja*. They knelt on the threshold and threw in the flowers. For the *barwari* Puja the Brahman widow again was the only candidate for *pushpanjali*. This is a great contrast to the situation in the city as we shall see later. The community expressed interest, however, in the spectacular parts of the Puja such as the *arati*, and the goat sacrifice. The evening *aratis* drew bigger crowds than the morning *arati*. On the evening of *Mahashtami*, members of all castes, men, women and children, were seen on the courtyard. The upper caste men and women were mostly standing near the *mondop*, in and around the *atchala*. The Bagdis, both men and women, were standing in the back. The Muchis are important to the ceremony as they supply the drummers or *dhulis*. A few other Muchi men were also seen standing in the back row. The Muchi women remain secluded, and they were not seen during the *arati*. It is possible that they came to visit when the courtyard remained empty of people. Again during *arati* a few Santal women and young men were seen to be standing in the back with the Bagdis. The villagers noted that this was the first year that the Santals had come to watch the Puja. It is significant that the Some family stayed away from the Puja completely, even though they had contributed to the *barwari* fund, as it was being performed on Samanta property. They went to see *pujas* in the adjoining villages.

The goat sacrifice on the evening of *Mahashtami* immediately followed the *arati*, and added extra zest to the event. The goat should be cut, by one of Kamar or ironsmith caste. He is expected to get the goat's head, while the owner of the goat claims the body. But as there is no Kamar in this village, the Kamar who came from a neighbouring village was in the habit of cutting the goat too far on the neck so that he got a larger share of meat than he should have. Therefore, for the last two years the leader of the Samanta house cut the goats himself, and the owners got all the meat. Four goats were

sacrificed that evening, two from the Samantas, and two by other individuals one of whom was a Bagdi. During the sacrifice the crowd burst forth spontaneously into collective emotion. All the men came forward to wear a drop of blood on the forehead, and began to dance. They danced for a long time in and outside of the *atchala*. The *arati* and the goat sacrifice on the *Nabami* brought forth crowds too, but the feeling was not raised as high as on *Mahashtami*, and we shall see the reasons later.

In the daytime of *Mahashtami*, however, the *Puja* courtyard was lacking in visitors as all the men of the village congregated by the village tanks to watch the fishing. Fish was caught in a large quantity on this day with the help of nets. Every family which had a share in the tanks got its respective share of fish supplied to the house. On *Mahashtami* all the upper-caste families retain a vegetarian diet. *Nabami* is looked forward to, therefore, as a day of festivity with an abundance of fish and the meat of sacrificed goats. To add to the merriment of the day, *Nabami* evening is reserved for drinking of country liquors. A little after dark, men gathered, according to their age-groups, for their drinking parties. The elders drank on the *Puja* courtyard, and even Bagdis drank with the upper castes.

The evening of *Bijoya Dashami* again illustrates village unity, and secular merriments. This evening, since ritualistic farewell has been bid to the deities by the priests, the image is not sacred any more, and the place of *Puja* is no longer forbidden. Young children of all castes get into the *mondop* to be near the image, and touch the feet of each of the deities for the final *pronam*. Bagdis were seen dancing in the *atchala*. They had a hard evening ahead of them, as they were to carry the image on their shoulders, and they were having their fun beforehand. When the image is brought down to the courtyard, the women of the Samanta houses and of other houses nearabouts bid farewell to the deity by the performance of the *Boron*. This is a ritualistic behaviour performed only by women. As this was a *barwari Puja*, it was felt that women of all the houses should perform this rite. As the image lost its sanctity, caste distinctions were no longer important. The image was carried around the entire village, with intermittent stops in the various neighbourhoods, so as to give an opportunity to the women of the nearby houses to perform the *boron*. Even the Some women came to do *boron* this evening on the ground that the image was no longer on Samanta property. While the women offered their

devotions, the men drank. During the procession with the image, usually the elder men of the upper-caste men take to drinking. The Bagdis and the upper-caste younger men need to stay sober as they have to carry the image on their shoulders. The upper-caste men took an oath to the Bagdis that evening that they should not on any account be allowed to come near the image in drunken condition. Although the image may be touched by any one on the evening of *Bijoya*, on no account may disrespect be shown toward it. It was curious to see the Bagdis stand guard of the image with tall *lathis*, and push away the upper-caste men when they came too near. The Bagdi women performed *boron* when the image was stopped near their homes. The Muchi women, however, were not seen to come forward for this rite. They watched from a distance. A few Santal women were following the party and joined in the merriment of the occasion. The image was finally immersed in the largest of the village tanks at one o'clock in the morning.

On the following evening, the young men enacted a play on a temporary stage. The story of the play was amusing and secular, and showed more sophistication than the traditional *jatras*. This was the first year that they had performed a play, and the entire village congregated to see it. Caste differences were seen in the sitting arrangements, the upper castes sitting in the front, and the lower castes sitting in the back.

The Puja in this village gives a good picture of village integration. We see men and women, higher and lower castes, performing their separate functions which are necessary for the completion of the ceremony. We find at the same time disinterest of the major section of the community in the rituals performed within the Puja *mondop*. The Brahmins perform the rituals, and the others observe only the spectacular parts. It is obvious that the Puja is more than a religious ceremony. It is a time for joy and festivities, when the routine of the daily life is altered, and to various members the Puja is significant in various ways.

We are all familiar with the *barwari* Puja in Calcutta, and only the main features will be here discussed. To begin with, the Puja is a time for great commercial gain. The coming of the Puja is announced for a month prior to its commencement by the decorations in the shops.

As Puja is a time for the wearing of new attire, the clothing stores have the largest number of customers. New clothes were also

associated with Puja in the village, but as these were to be bought at distant towns, many people were seen to be doing without them. In the city, however, Puja and new clothes, and I should say, new *saris* have come to be synonymous.

The coming of the Puja is also made known by the *barwari* Puja committees, by the placards they put up on all the streets, alleys, and parks, revealing the names of the committees. The *barwari* Puja pandal has acquired a distinct character. It is a temporary structure put up only for this occasion. Permission is needed from the Calcutta Corporation before these structures are put up. Usually the place where the image is placed and where the rituals are performed by priests are barricaded. The rest of the encompassment is for the public, divisions being made for men and women. Records of popular songs are played with amplifiers to guide the public to the pandal. Often they take the place of the traditional drums, and the continuous blare of amplifiers is an annoyance to everyone.

The city *barwaris* pay great attention on decorations of the pandal and the attractiveness of the image. The conventional form of the image has been changed in the city. The five figures are usually separated, and placed in various settings. In the *barwari* Puja we see life-like images. This is a significant change from the traditional pattern. The conventional images were to produce awe and reverence among the public; the modern images, however, are human. Great stress is placed on original artistic creations, and there is much competition among the *barwaris* for originality of ideas. Names of the artistes who have built the images are often displayed in the pandals. We may note again that in the traditional society, the potter who builds the image is completely insignificant. No one cares about his identity. It is his family art and he is pleased to do as well as his father. In the city, the images are photographed and displayed in the newspapers and judgment is passed by the public on the selection of the best images. The appearance of the images produces much entertainment.

In the *barwari* Puja pandal only the act of worshipping is done by the Brahman priests. The priests are often not known personally by the members of the community, and specialize only in *barwari* worship. The arrangements of the objects needed for Puja is made by any of the organizers of the Puja committee. The preparation of the *naivedyas* (fruit offerings and dry rice), and arrangements of flowers

may be made by members of any castes. In the *barwari* Puja the feeling is that everyone should be able to receive more of the ritual benefits than were formerly allowed. Great stress is put on the offering of the *pushpanjali*. Throngs of people gather for this rite. No feelings of caste prevail. Fasting and clean clothes are necessary for this ritual offering of flowers, but there is no way of checking and these matters are left entirely on the conscience of the individuals. The interest in *pushpanjali* is greatly different from the situation in the village.

The *arati* gathers great crowds in the pandals. But there is no goat sacrifice in the *barwari* Puja. Certain fruits and vegetables are the only objects of sacrifice. Animal sacrifice does not seem to appeal to the aesthetic sense of the city man. Young men, on the other hand, sublimate their feelings by dancing with incense burners in the Puja pandal, and there is competition for the best performance.

On the evening of *Vijaya Dashami*, the women of the neighbourhood come for *boron* in the traditional manner. Any women may come but often they are from the houses of the organising committee. A time is fixed for *boron* and announced on a notice board in the Puja pandal. The *boron* is followed by *sindurkhela*. In this married women place *sindur* on the forehead of the deity, and then on the heads of each other. Lately this has become a great sport.

Finally the images are carried on lorries towards the river. The lorries are decorated, and the images placed so that everyone gets a good view while the lorries are in motion. The names of the Puja committees are displayed in big letters on the respective lorries. Usually members of the organising committee follow their image in another lorry shouting and saying slogans. The lorries with the images and the organisers go around a good part of the city. On this evening people throng the streets to see the procession of images which naturally follow one another towards the river ghats where they are finally immersed.

In the city, the drunken hilarity which was seen in Bigra, is not noticeable. It is traditional to drink *siddhi* on *Vijaya Dashami* after the image is immersed, but this is done privately. Drinking does not provide the major source of amusement. For successive evenings during and after the Puja, the pandals abound with exhibitions, concerts, stage plays, etc. These are significant to the Puja time. Puja is the time for all the local talents to introduce themselves.

In the comparison of the village and the city *barwari* we see that in the village the rituals are completely in the hands of a few persons, while the others enjoy the time by watching the spectacular parts of the rituals and with secular amusements. In the city, however, there is a spread of the rituals among many and while some feel that the rituals benefits are received by all, others feel that this spread makes the ceremony less religious. The secular aspects of the city *barwari* have both commercial and artistic value. The building of the pandal, the decorations, and the hiring of the lorries bring profits to many concerns. And we see the focus on individuality and artistic talent in the building of new types of images, in the concerts, and in the theatrical performances.

DISCUSSION

Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay : The subject is now open to discussion. Has anyone got any question?

Dr. Versluys : I was very much interested to hear of the change which, I understood, has taken place from the purely family celebration into community celebration. Now you also mentioned that in villages you had information of similar *barwari* celebration, say 150 years ago. I should like to ask, could you explain how family celebrations turned into community celebrations? Is that a matter of economic change mainly or is it a matter of principle?

Dr. Sarma : I think, I said that with the family celebrations there were community celebrations also. Originally these celebrations were family celebrations and then community celebrations also came in vogue.

Dr. Versluys : Would you regard the community celebration as a sign of increased community feeling among the villagers?

Dr. Sarma : I am not clear about it myself. In the city it has often been found that in one locality two *barwari* pujas are being performed by two rival groups.

Prof. Nirmal Bose : There is one point and that is that in the old village very often leadership was linked to certain families but today after that kind of aristocratic leadership is on the point of disappearance, a new kind of integration is actually coming into being. Very often we find that the *Jatras* which were formerly initiated by rich men or clubs, are giving place to new institutions in which the commoners also can participate. Of course this is a sign of democratising at a certain level but this integration is adhoc and it does not filter over other facets of life. Just as a famine would draw together a certain number of people for some specific purpose, so it is more or less like an agglomeration at a point where adhoc experiments of all kinds are taking place. In the community celebrations people take charge of different duties and they are accustomed to taking charges which were formerly prerogative of rich families. But we do not see that there is any permanent integration.

Prof. T. C. Das : In the modern society we find that our religion is individualistic by which I mean, if I am permitted to use the expres-

sion, that we are more selfish. We only look after our personal work and in this respect other communities may differ from ours and it is from that point of view that our Durga Puja used to be performed in earlier days by individual families. Now the Puja may be divided into two parts, the sacramental part and the festive part. Festive part is for the common people and the other part for the individual in the first instance and then for others of his family.

Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay: Dr. Sarma has read an interesting paper on Durga Puja Festival. I should like to point out here that *barwari* pujas had been in existence centering round certain village worships which are very common in Western Bengal and in other parts of Bengal. These are the Dharma Puja and the Caḍaka Puja of which we find references in our Mangal literature and in the Dharmapurāṇa (Sunya Purāṇa) which is one of our oldest pieces of Bengali literature. Now these celebrations were normally carried out by people who are termed lower castes, but the Brahmins also came in because of the increasing repute of these deities and because of the absorption of these deities into the hierarchies of gods. The priest in such a worship is not a high-caste Brahmin. In the case of Dharma Puja it is a Dom and not a high caste Brahmin. In these *barwari* festivals in the *mondops* I have seen the Sadgops and Bagdis; but the Muchis were not allowed on the ground that,—as they said—they eat beef. With regard to the popular Durga Puja in Calcutta, I know that the first Sarbojanin Puja in 1926 was performed by Simla Byayam Samiti. A niece of Tagore, Sarala Debi, started the *Birastami*, during the Durga Puja, still earlier in the Swadeshi movement period. Then there was a display of physical feats at the Puja time. The political movement behind Sarbojanin Puja in 1926 stimulated contact between castes. It was accompanied by something else, which was the removal of untouchability advocated by Gandhiji and this produced good results in Bengal.

Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay: I now request Sri Ajit Kishore Roy, Research Officer, Tribal Research Bureau, Orissa, to give his discourse on "A Study of Brahman Sasan of Orissa" in the District of Puri.

A STUDY OF BRAHMAN SASAN OF ORISSA

AJIT KISHORE ROY

In former times it was the practice among the Rajas of Puri to donate land upon learned Brahmins. Sometimes a whole village might be donated to a number of Brahmin families along with some common land which was distributed by the Brahmins to some of the servant castes. Such villages are known in Orissa as Brahman Sasan villages. In the present paper we shall study the social and economic position of one such village named Bira-Narasinghapur.

It might be also pointed out here that the Brahman Sasan system came into being during the reign of Govinda-Vidhyadhar in 1541-48 A.D. who founded the village of Bira-Govindapura. These Brahmins were originally invited from the old capital city of Jajpur on the Baitarani river. Those who came to Puri were distinguished as Dakshinatya Sreni and those who remained in Jajpur were known as the Uttara Sreni. Both of these classes are originally said to have come from Kanauj and are therefore also known as Kanaujia Brahmins.

There are altogether 16 sasan villages founded by the different Rajas of Puri. These Brahmins have the privilege of sitting within the *mukti mandapa* hall in the temple of Puri in order to function as a theocratic legislative council. There are 16 pillars in the mukti mandap which represent the 16 sasan villages. Thirty-two smaller villages other than these were also founded by the queens or other officials of the rajas in the same district, the latter being known as Karapara. The latter are near the Sasan villages.

Originally, it is believed, there was no social gradation among the Brahmins of sasan villages, all being considered to be of equal status. The last independent king, Mukundadeva, who founded the village of Danda-Mukundapur, introduced to some extent this kind of social differentiation. At a later period Narasinghadeva founded the village studied, namely, Bira-Narasinghapur as a special gift to the preceptors, or Rajgurus or Samantas, as they were the repositories of learning and masters of astronomy, astrology and magic.

The Brahmins of Bira-Narasinghapur also say that king Narasinghadeva made a permanent rent-free gift of 6,250 acres, known as Chakradan, to the chief priest or Samanta or Rajguru. This Brahmin village was established with 128 equal divisions, and each family was given a plot of homestead land measuring five bakharas, fifty feet in breadth and twelve and half manas or 3 acres in area. In addition, each family was given seventeen and a half acres of cultivable land. The remainder was reserved for the maintenance of village servants or Sevakas and the general use of the village.

Village structure and population of different castes :

The village of Bira-Narasinghapur is inhabited by seventeen different castes which are distributed in different settlements in a manner which symbolizes their caste unity and also their relative status in the village as whole. The Brahmin settlement is located at the centre and the houses are in two rows. One is on the southern and the other on the northern side of the road which runs from east to west. The Brahmin settlement is divided into two portions, the western one known as prathama khandi, first part, and the eastern one known as ditiya khandi, second part. Among the other caste groups, the servants or sevakas, formed by a number of different castes, are located near the vicinity of the two main temples, at the two extremities of the Brahmin settlement, one in the west and the other in the east. The lowly Bauri caste and the Hinduised Sahara tribe live side by side in separate settlements about a furlong away from the northern end of the Brahmin settlement. Nine, five and three families of Teli (oilman), Barika (barber), and Gudia (confectioner) castes have purchased land from the Brahmins and they are settled within the Brahmin area. The village census also revealed the fact that one-third of the total Brahmin population have left the Bira-Narasinghapur village for different places for purpose of service. Most of them are temporary emigrants and come home during festive occasions. Some have left their families behind while the majority have gone to their place of service with their wife and children.

TABLE 1

Caste	Traditional occupation	Number of families	Total population	Percentage
Brahmin	Scholars	175	928	54.7
Chasa	Cultivator	35	173	9.6
Bauri	Labourer	64	291	16.3
Barisa	Barber	5	21	1.2
Mali	Gardener	6	24	1.3
Pujari	Priest	11	57	3.2
Kahalia	Trumpeter	5	22	1.2
Jyotisha	Astrologer	3	20	1.1
Teli	Oilman	9	33	2.4
Dhoba	Washerman	8	31	2.3
Chamar	Leather worker	9	26	1.4
Keuta	Fisherman	3	14	.7
Dom	Drummer	2	15	.8
Gudia	Confectioner	3	11	.6
Gauda	Cowherd	3	9	.5
Barber	Carpenter	2	37	2.6
Sahara	Labourer	15	69	3.8

Occupational mobility in Brahmin caste.

The Brahmins of Bira-Narasinghapur were traditionally engaged in the study and teaching of the scriptures and worked as priests of the rajas of Puri. They were also skilled in astronomy, astrology and magic, which won for them respect and influence among other castes. Moreover, they gained the affection and confidence of the rulers and were raised to positions of importance in the court. Many families also engaged in money-lending or agriculture through servants. But today the situation is different. In table 2 the number of Brahmins engaged in various occupations are compared with one another. Among several occupations, the percentage under clerical service is highest and money-lending, one of the older occupations, is lowest. The percentage under agricultural and teaching occupations are the same. Brahmin do not cultivate their lands themselves; a Brahmin considers the Chasa caste as indispensable to agriculture. The Chasa caste forms an intermediate class between the landlord and landless workers. There are two individuals in the Brahmin caste who

get their livelihood by means of day labour, but they serve only in other Brahmin families.

TABLE 2

Distribution of occupation in the Brahmin caste.

Occupation	Number	Percentage
Teaching	50	18.4
Business	35	12.9
Agriculture	50	18.4
Money-lending	11	4.05
Technical job	31	11.4
Clerical job	94	34.6

Traditional political institution :—

The most important institution of the village is formed by the Brahmin elders and commonly called the Mahajan Mela. Most of the work of common interest in the village is done by joint effort under the direction of Mahajan Mela. Before a meeting is held, the Mali (gardener) rings a bell along the main street in the Brahmin quarter announcing the coming session of the Mela to all the members of Brahmin settlement. The members of the Mahajan Mela meet as a panchayat to discuss matters of interest to their own caste or to the village, and also to arbitrate in disputes of various kinds that might arise among themselves or otherwise in the village. Formerly, the decisions of the Mela were not subject to appeal before any higher authority. But today, the Mela has lost some of its influence. The young Brahmins of the village do not hesitate to attend and even oppose the decision of the elders in the Mahajan Mela. When people are moreover dissatisfied with the decision of the Mahajan Mela, they file an appeal at the District Judge's Court in Puri. The authority of the Mahajan Mela seems to have been reduced considerably. Last year the people of the village welcomed the new panchayet system of the State Government intended to introduce local self-government. The new village panchayet is composed of representatives from all the important castes. Today, the Mahajan Mela and the panchayat are not functioning in an orderly way. The village panchayet implements all their conventions and rules in consultation with the Mahajan Mela.

SEVAKAS AND THEIR SERVICE

The Sevakas or Servants comprise a number of different castes who have functions intimately connected with the temple and also with some of the domestic and religious observances of the Brahmins. There are two main temples at two extremities of the settlement and the sevakas live close to the temples. The idols of Nilakantha and Lokanatha are worshipped at the eastern and western temples respectively. They are made of stone, while their surrogates, which have to be carried in procession along the road during festivals, are of metal. In addition to the daily duties, the sevakas perform assigned duties during great religious festivals.

The sevakas are paid for their service in the form of land, but the enjoyment of the land is conditional upon the performance of their respective duties in the temple and the village. The service tenure land of the sevakas has become divided, as if it were joint family property. The barber and washerman have divided the total number of Brahmin families between themselves. Table 3 shows the quantity of service-tenure land given to different sevakas. The sevakas are subject to the authority of the Mahajan Mela. The lands allocated to them are from the village's communal property or Kotha Sampatti which belongs to the Brahmins as a whole. The Brahmin sevak or Pujari, Mali (gardener), Kahalia (trumpeter), Dom (drummer) and Nahaka (astrologer) are the main temple servants; while the Barika (barber), and Dhoba (washerman) are village servants. Gudia (confectioner) and Keuta (boatman and fisherman) castes are not counted as sevakas, but they are paid for their services by land.

TABLE 3

Sevak	No. of families	Quantity of land per family
Brahmin Sevak		
(a) (Panda)	3	2. 0 acres
(b) (Dakhit)	2	1.25 "
Mali	5	1.50 "
Barika	5	5. 0 "
Dhoba	8	5. 0 "
Dom	2	0.05 "
Kahalia	1	3. 0 "
Nahaka	1	2. 0 "
Keuta	4	1.25 "
Gudia	2	2. 0 "

Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay: Before I open the discourse to discussion, I should like to congratulate our former student Sri Ajit Kishore Roy for his research work which he has undertaken. Will anyone ask any question for further information?

(Dr. J. D. N. Versluys asked for clarification of certain figures in the tables given by Sri Roy and clarification was made by Sri Roy).

Prof. Nirmal Bose: On a point of information, Mr. Chairman, I may point out that the Institute of Ramkrishna Mission has also been approached by the UNESCO and we are conducting an observation, a kind of survey in different villages on the kinds of entertainment which are available to the peoples in different places. The study on one of these villages has just been completed and we have tried to find out how much of the old arts and crafts are practised by the village folks as their means of their livelihood and what is their present economic status. This is a village about 100 miles from Calcutta. Another village, Pamhati, which is only 10 miles from Calcutta, has been selected for such study and one of our students has been carrying on the research work in the same direction. When we have all these materials we can join in the conferences initiated by the Calcutta University.

Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay: We shall try to hold another conference in which we shall invite persons who can tell us of the changes that have come about in Folk craft & Folk music as well as in classical music. You know that classical music in our country had been influenced towards the end of the last century by attempts to introduce certain elements of European music. There have been other changes. Those who are competent to speak on this subject will be invited. I hope also to have a paper on changes of content of folk songs.

This particular session of the conference will now come to an end. I have to convey my thanks to the UNESCO authorities who are responsible for starting this seminar. They wrote to our Vice-Chancellor, asking him if the Calcutta University would take it up. So our best thanks are due to them for having stimulated this work and we are very glad that the representative of the UNESCO, Dr. Versluys, has been present here and has been taking interest in different papers, discourses and discussions. I have also to convey my thanks to my friends who have come and made the conference a

limited success,—we cannot claim that it is a very great success. I also offer my sincere thanks to Dr. Datta-Majumdar, the Director of the Department of Anthropology, Government of India, who is one of our old students, to Sri Ajit Kishore Roy, an ex-student as well and to Professor Nirmal Bose, who is one of our earliest students of this institution and to Dr. Sarma, Research Fellow in the National Institute of Sciences. In this way by co-operative effort we can succeed. We have co-operation from different organisations, individuals and others and we hope it will be forthcoming in greater measure at our next conference.

Dr. Datta-Majumdar: On behalf of the participants may I express my sincere thanks to Professor Chattopadhyay for having convened this conference and I shall be looking forward to more such conferences.

Proceedings of the second conference on Study of Traditional Cultures held at the ground floor hall of the Institute of Jute Technology, 35, Ballygunge Circular Road, Calcutta on Friday, the 27th April, 1956.

PRESENT :

1. Prof. N. K. Sidhanta, Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University.
2. Dr. J. D. N. Versluys (UNESCO, Director, Social Research Centre), Calcutta.
3. Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay (Convenor), University Professor of Anthropology, Calcutta.
4. Prof. T. C. Das, Reader, Dept. of Anthropology.
5. Prof. N. K. Bose, Reader, Dept. of Geography.
6. Sri Gopal Halder, Writer and Critic, Member, Senate.
7. Prof. Niharranjan Roy, Bageswari Professor of Fine Arts, Calcutta.
8. Sri G. S. Roy, Lecturer, Dept. of Anthropology.
9. Sri Suresh Ch. Chakrabarty, D.Mus., All India Radio.
10. Sri Niharranjan Sen, Instt. of Jute Technology.
11. Sri Ajit Mukherjee, Director, Instt. of Art in Industry.
12. Miss J. Sarma, Research Fellow, National Institute of Science.
13. Sri Benoy Ghose, Sociologist and Writer.
14. Sri Pradyotkumar Sengupta, Ornithologist (with hobby as collector of dolls).
15. Sri Bishnu Dey, Poet and Writer, and Professor of Literature.
16. Swami Nityaswarupananda, Ramkrishna Institute of Culture.
17. Sri M. N. Basu, Lecturer, Department of Anthropology.
18. Sri Sudhendu Mukhopadhyay, Research Scholar, Govt. of India.
19. Sri Biswanath Bandyopadhyay, Research Worker.
20. Sri Kalyan K. Ganguli, Lecturer, Department of Ancient Indian History and Culture.
21. Sri Amulya Banerjee, Research Scholar, University of Calcutta.
22. Sri T. C. Roychaudhuri, Lecturer, Department of Anthropology.
23. Sri M. L. Chakrabarty, Professor, Medical College.
24. Sri J. M. Sen, Formerly Head of the Department of Education, Calcutta University.
25. Sri D. Sen, Lecturer, Department of Anthropology.
26. Sri P. Pramanik, Cultural Research Institute, Govt. of West Bengal.
27. Sri B. Burman, Deputy Director, Cultural Research Institute, West Bengal.
28. Sri B. Raychaudhuri, Department of Anthropology, Govt. of India.
29. Sri N. Pandey, Research Scholar, Saugar University.
30. Sri H. Mitra.
31. Sri Samir Ghose.
32. Sri Andre Beteille, Post-Graduate Student.
33. Sri G. C. Goswami.

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| 34. Sri J. N. Ghosh. | 40. Sri Ramendranath Banerjee. |
| 35. Sri-B. K. Chakrabarti. | 41. Sri Kumar Chatterjee, Post-Graduate student. |
| 36. Sm. S. G. Gidwaney, Post-Graduate student. | 42. Sri Amalkumar Das, Post-Graduate student. |
| 37. Sm. Geeta Mukhopadhyay, Post-Graduate student. | 43. Sri S. P. Ghorai, Post-Graduate student. |
| 38. Sri Santibhushan Nandi, Post-Graduate student. | 44. Sri K. P. Chatterjee, Post-Graduate student. |
| 39. Sri K. Shasmal, Post-Graduate student. | 45. Sri J. N. Saikia, Post-Graduate student. |

Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay : I now call upon the Vice-Chancellor to inaugurate the conference.

The Vice-Chancellor, C. U. (Prof. N. K. Sidhanta) : Prof. Chattopadhyay and other friends, inauguration of this conference is a very formal one, because this is the second series of a conference which was held a few weeks ago when we had an interesting discussion on the study of traditional cultures. That discussion is being continued today, and our programme today will include a Paper on Folk Toys by Sri Ajit Mookerjee, a Note on Chitrakars by Sri Biswanath Banerji and a Note on changes in Sari border designs in Santipur by Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay. To-morrow we shall have an even more interesting programme with study of the changes in Traditional music, Baul songs of Bengal and their modern forms, and changes in Santal songs. I do not know how far it will be actually musical and how far we will be critical of the music, but there will be some illustrations. Today we shall devote ourselves to other forms of folk art. Therefore, without more preamble I would request Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay to get on with the programme.

Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay : Dr. Versluys, Director, Social Research Centre, UNESCO will now say a few words about this conference. You know him well as Director of the Social Research Centre, UNESCO.

Dr. Versluys : Mr. Chairman, Vice-Chancellor, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for inviting me to this conference, because I believe we are very much interested in hearing views about the changes which are going to be discussed today.

The only thing that I should like to mention is that Seminars like this are organised by the UNESCO. I believe these Seminars are

particularly helpful to the UNESCO to have the experience of social and cultural changes and the views of those who are interested in the cultural aspect of life. As you know, UNESCO would like to have an idea of the changes which occur in the cultures in various countries of the world because of social and economic changes that are taking place. We have now before us a subject which is very important, Culture change as revealed—on the one hand by music and on the other by dolls; and of course there is a difference between the two. But we know that both have large interconnections with economic, social and cultural changes. These questions are certainly difficult to answer. I believe it will be of interest to see how various aspects of culture react to economic and social changes of our time.

Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay : Sri Ajit Mookerjee, Director, Art in Industry Institute will now read his Paper on Folk Toys.

FOLK TOYS

SRI AJIT MOOKERJEE

Mr. Chairman, a toy made by a village woman in India even today is essentially timeless. It has the impress of an ageless type which persists through periodic variations. Such types are modelled by hand and never with the help of mould.

The hand shapes the primeval material which is clay, into short conical stumps. As a result of the interaction between gradual pressure and the resistance of the clay, a distinct form emerges which is more abstract than representational. The face, arms and legs are symbolic formulations asserting a tradition in which the temporal is subdued to the archetypal.

Figures of mother and child and virgins predominate. The head is shaped like a *kalasa* (pitcher) and sometimes finished with a spade or fan-like *chura* (decoration on top of head). The eyes are either affixed, or incised or indented; some have no mouth at all, on others there is only the suggestion of it. The portion below the waist line is generally bell-shaped to give the doll a firm foothold.

Another type has the navel pierced quite deep, the front lower part is applied drapery but the back is split open showing the legs. This suggests that the terracotta figures were originally nude and part of a fertility cult, gradually changing into toys for children, which seldom exhibit any sex symbol.

The function of these ageless types of figurines, human or animal, is not predetermined. It is established by usage and association. Placed under a banyan tree the figure of a horse or a dog is an object of offerings, but to a child at home it is a toy. The grown-up and the child participate in the same ritual of life, each in his own way, thereby contributing to the totality of tradition.

The link between ritual and play is intimate. A woman makes an image of *Sasthi*, a household deity, and at the same time explains the *Vrata*-story to the children sitting around her, so that when they get the same image as a thing to play with, the theme persists in their minds. The toy to them becomes a symbol of something they know, not what they merely see, thus fulfilling their inner needs and

desires. Likewise, toy animals also perform a double role, retaining all the qualities of a type the earliest specimens of which have been found at Harappa, Mohenjo-daro and other chalcolithic sites.

In these Indus Valley terracottas, generally made by pinching and pelleting, the nose is prominent and the eyes are round and separately affixed and sometimes pierced. Necklaces and girdles are prominent in female figurines which are otherwise nude, the navel is indicated, the mount of Venus is not conspicuous and breasts are pelleted. The headdresses are either fan-shaped or spade-like, and arms are horizontal or bent to hold child at the breast, as in the case of a Harappa figurine.

Terracotta folk toys are either sunbaked or fired. As the firing proceeds, various shades of ochre and red orange emerge, according to the chemical components of the clay which has been strained or has impure ingredients. A good firing is generally obtained at a temperature of 800°C. to 1000°C. But if the combustion is defective, the clay turns to indiscriminate grey or black. When, however, a complete black is aimed at, the toy is either put in an earthen vessel covered with husk which is burnt with charcoal, or subjected to what is known as smoke-bath. To heighten the natural colour, a slip of deeper red, grey or black is applied. When the terracotta artist wants to go beyond natural colours, pigments produced from earth ochres are applied with simple, bold sweeps.

The whole process involves a collective technique, from the time when earth is brought from a selected area, mixed with water, strained into fine clay, and kneaded to the stage when it is pressed into form, sunbaked or fired, and coloured. Mothers and daughters play a leading role in this co-operative effort. In the house of a potter, even a small kiln is kept apart for womenfolk to make dolls and toys.

A distinction must be drawn between hand-modelled and mould-made terracottas. Toys modelled by hand on the same theme can produce no exact repetition, though their close, primitive form may give an impression of uniformity. On the other hand, the moulded ones conform to patterns, which, of course, are numerous and of which a large number of copies can be made at will. Sometimes the head is from a mould while the lower portion is made on the wheel.

The original mould is hand-made and carried from generation to generation in a potter's family. The variety and number of moulded terracottas are astonishing and the different purposes they serve are endless. It is in them that regional and time variations are most

marked, new elements entering the old patterns, enriching and enlarging them in striking ways.

Between the product of the mould and the finished ware there lies a whole world of traditional craft which operates as a co-ordinating force. The sense of the whole is always present in the mind of the artist, not in the form of a rigid code but as a living social concept. Each artist contributes his own to this cohesive but varied tradition according to his sense of colour and power of observation. It is colour that animates the figurines. Even when the mould is of an abstract nature, the cast is somewhat naturalised by the use of colour and this lesser degree of abstraction is what differentiates the moulded terracottas from the hand-modelled ones. Colouring also is the principal means by which an enchanting world of make-believe for children is created, where an elephant can be green, a horse blue, and a cow a combination of green, red, blue and yellow. Even when the strokes of the artist, as a result of repetition through years, tend to be stylized, these dolls retain the vitality of the original colour combination.

The predominant colours are kajjala (lampblack), gaurika (ochre), harital (orpiment), krishna (black), alakta (lac), nila (indigo), harit (green), mete-sindur (orange-achre) and are applied on a white-coating round prepared from khori (chalk). They are mixed with the gum of either the bel fruit (*Jejebel jujuba*), the neem (*Margosa*) or tamarind seed paste so that they last long. Quite often garjan oil, prepared from an admixture of incense, resin and lac, is applied over the paint to reinforce its durability.

Occasionally, powdered mica is so sprinkled over the figurines that they glitter.

However interesting the front of most of the figurines may be, the back is always simple and unimpressive. The Red Indians keep the back of their toys comparatively bare in the belief that this will help their children to live long. A similar belief may have existed in India too, but no wholly satisfactory explanation is available why our dolls and toys are invariably meant to be looked at from the front only.

Local styles are strong in the moulded terracottas but they have also certain basic affinities despite regional variations. This underlying unity was achieved through frequent interaction of ideas and experiences at seasonal melas and places of pilgrimage and in the course of riverine trade, which brought together the far-flung parts of this vast subcontinent.

The moulded type also has many figurines connected with mythological themes and used as votive offerings. These have a striking resemblance to the innumerable terracottas found at different historical sites, such as, Basarh, Pataliputra, Tamluk, Rajghat, Kosam, Mathura, Sankisa, Besnagar, Sari-Dheri, Nagari, Taxila, Pawaya, Bengarh, Maski, Kumrahar, Lauriya-Nandangarh and Ahichchhatra, belonging to a period extending mainly from the pre-Mauryan to the Gupta age. Those modelled by hand in this historical group are part of the ageless type with a certain peculiarity—the separation of the legs by an incised line, the two legs together tapering almost to a point—while the main characteristics of the moulded ones are: They are generally round-faced; their bodies are not built up from separate parts; they have elaborate headdresses and are lavishly ornamented, the jewelled girdle remaining a constant feature; despite clothing or suggestion of it, details of sex are shown, though indication of pubic hair is rare. Female types dominate this group.

It is now beyond doubt that the terracotta tradition greatly influenced ancient Indian sculpture. At a certain stage the stone-sculptor was able to overcome the influence of the wood and ivory technique and could recapture in stone the plastic qualities of modelled clay. A comparative study of the Bharhut and Sanchi carvings and the products of the Mathura and Gupta tradition illustrate this difference.

Of material used besides clay in toy-making, wood is the most common. Dolls are also made from pith, papier-mache, cow-dung, bronze, rags and vegetable fibres—the use of the last two being practically extinct. The makers of wood, pith and bronze toys are guild artists, known as *sutradhara* (carpenter), *malakara* (garland-maker), and *karmakara* (metal worker) and they are usually menfolk, whereas in the potter's (*kumbhakara*) family women and children generally play an important role.

Each material presents its own problems of form and treatment; wood and pith works, for instance, have to be angular, whereas a bronze doll has much greater plastic tension.

The wood-carver and the pith-worker never duplicate as they shape separate blocks and chips into figurines, human or animal, though they follow a craft which has understood rules and methods developed through the ages. As a result of gradual and continuous change, however, the method of representation sometimes takes a

particular direction and acquires a style different from the archetype. They do not aim at exact representation of an object but strive towards simplification, bringing out features that impart rhythm and expression and reveal the essential; the rest of the object is treated formally.

Pith figurines are always painted whereas the wooden ones are sometimes not. The method of colour application is the same as in terracottas. In some cases, the wooden and even clay toys are covered with a piece of rag over which layers of colour are applied to get a better result; the cloth is made to adhere to the toy in such a way that one cannot make it out from the material after it has been painted.

There are specimens of wood and pith-work, parts of which are joined or stringed and can be moved. Suspension holes are found in numerous terracotta plaques, obviously for hanging on the wall.

A striking example in papier-mache, commonly found in Orissa not the only one of its kind, is a deer with two heads, one of which is bent towards the grass in the posture of eating and the other shows the animal as startled and alert. Two attitudes are presented in one figure indicating simultaneous movement, as we often see in a painting by Picasso, thus adding a fourth dimension.

Toy-making in metal is confined to a very limited group of people. The medium requires scientific knowledge and skill, and as the process is laborious, it is restricted to menfolk. The universal practice is *cire perdue*, i.e., the lost wax process. But an interesting method, although almost extinct in other parts of India, is still practised by the Mals, a small community found in Bankura and adjacent areas. By tradition they are metal workers, but they do not use bellows.

They make the rudimentary form of the object in a particular kind of clay composed of loam and soil from rat's hole and ant-hills and mixed with sand and rice husk (these components prevent the object from cracking even after exposure to intense heat). A wax coating is then applied. For pelleting and designing, resin-mixed wax thread is worked out on the body according to requirements. The whole thing is again covered with layers of the different components of the special clay, with the addition of chopped jute.

At the highest point of the mould a funnel is opened through which pieces of metal are dropped and the mould is kept slanting at the time of firing. From the smoke coming out of the funnel the worker makes out that the metal is ready and he immediately turns

the mould into the right position. It is left to cool overnight and the cast is then taken off.

The pelleting and designing used in the process are reminiscent of the technique applied in hand-modelled terracottas. The style also evokes memories of the spiral patterns found in wicker works among which dolls and toys are now rare.

These Bankura bronzes have a marked resemblance to the Benin bronzes, the technique of whose casting, according to some scholars, is believed to have been introduced in West Africa from abroad. It is also interesting to note that the Bankura-Singbhum area still produces the best copper and iron in India. Was it one of the sources on which Mohenjo-daro drew? Were the bronze figurines of this type found at Mohenjo-daro actually made there or transported from elsewhere?

Indian dolls and toys sometimes open up a world which knows no frontiers. They show striking affinities with certain types found in Egypt, in Crete, and even in centres of the Maya civilization. Flinders Petrie points out that in the workmen's quarters at Memphis there are Indian-type terracottas of women and of the seated Kuvera. D. H. Gordon says that a linking of all the terracottas of the Hellenistic period from the Eastern Mediterranean to Bengal is necessary. Sometimes the link between a particular doll and a story, which is lost in this country, may be traced abroad where our folk tales travelled in very ancient times. In Japan, Daruma (Dharma) dolls are dedicated to Yakusi, the Buddhist God of Medicine and the Guruma type has something in common with an ancient Japanese toy known as Buriburi. The Guruma toy traces its origin to a very old and celebrated legend of Umi-Sati and Lama-Sati.

That the Indian tradition has survived innumerable vicissitudes through the ages is due to the fact that the social organisation was based on the village community, in the corporate life of which artists and craftsmen played their assigned roles. The potter, for instance, was given plots of land or fixed quantities of grain at harvest time by village people in exchange for which he supplied them their requirements, dolls and toys included. The malakar functioned in the same way. The system meant security, without which the artists and artisans could not have developed their crafts in close touch with tradition. Under such conditions, the craftsman worked out age-old forms, and countless recapitulations resulted in a state of mind in

which he could reproduce the most abstract without any conscious effort or distortion. Even where he made a significant change, he was perhaps unaware of it. He could introduce new patterns, give the old a new look, but the possibilities of a radical assertion of his individuality in the modern sense were very much limited because of the total impact of a social and religious structure extending from the joint family to the panchayat.

Another important factor for the continuity of tradition was mythology and folk-tales, always a source of stimulation to the rural artist. Their dramatic intensity is felt most in the dolls and toys still made by the few tribes that have survived in more or less inaccessible areas. In these, art and magic are almost inseparable. A village potter can make a tiger without any story element, but a tribal tiger must have some association with a legend and an element of mantra and, therefore, a form and fantasy of its own.

The Adivasis, though scattered and isolated, maintain a pattern of abstract art which is more or less similar. They still hold clues to hidden rituals, which include the sound-values of many images, akin to the Tantric Vija-mantras, whose meaning can help further study of Indian iconography.

With the impact of the industrial revolution and new forms of economy, disintegration of the old Indian system began and the village craftsman was dissociated from the rest of the community. He lost his grip over social reality and also some important secrets of the ancient technique. Decadence of content and form is evident, but even now the force of tradition neutralizes the shortcomings to a minimum, making the contemporary product something that is always tolerable. However, where commercialization dominates, the result is unfortunate.

A systematic study of Indian dolls and toys can be a fascinating incursion into our cultural patterns, revealing historical and psychological trends of great importance. In fact, folk toys are in a way the autobiography of the Indian people.

DISCUSSION

Vice-Chancellor : The Paper is now open to discussion.

Sri P. K. Sen Gupta : I would request Mr. Mookerjee to illustrate some of the types on which he has spoken.

Sri Ajit Mookherji used the specimens of toys from the collection of Sri P. K. Sen Gupta, Sri Binoy Ghose and Sri Pulin Sen exhibited at the Conference to illustrate his arguments. A series of Alladi dolls to depict the changes in pattern were included in the exhibits.

Sri Ajit Mookherji : Here is one specimen about which I spoke. This is an Alladi type—it is the original primitive type. This is Bostomi type; then this second one is the British type. Things have now changed. This third one is the American type which is now made in America in large quantities. From these you can see that they illustrate some changes in type.

Dr. Versluys : In Western countries we see that as soon as a new discovery is made there are toys of those things. For instance, there are small aeroplane toys and things of that sort. I would like to know how far a normal modern toy is an addition to the traditional culture.

Sri Ajit Mookherji : Mechanical toys come from abroad, and our children except in the city are not familiar with this kind of mechanical toys. It is unfortunate that the toy-makers of India do not know the psychology of our own environment or child psychology, and they have copied these things from the west and they try to sell them throughout the length and breadth of the country. I think it is unfortunate, and it is a great problem we are now facing about the toy industry.

The original type has disappeared and modern things like aeroplanes, tanks, motor cars are now capturing the market. The clay models are no longer liked.

Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay : I have a few observations to make in this connection. About 40 or 50 years ago when Sri Ajit Mookherji had not seen the world things were different from what they are now. I have visited melas held on the occasion of Rathajatra and Chadaḥak over forty years ago and I have seen the different traditional types of toys that were exhibited and sold there, namely, *Bania's* toy doll

(Beneputul), Kumore putul, Kathputul and also other toys, such as household utensils—pots, pans, ovens. Then I found also dolls of the modern type, made of porcelain. I visited a mela recently in this area at the Chaḍak festival, held last month. At the Chaḍak mela at Puddapukur held on the 13th April, there were the following stalls at which toys were being sold, and also other goods :—

1. About 16 stalls of earthen-ware toys—unburnt and also burnt in some cases, but painted. They consisted of—
 - (a) images of gods and goddesses, like Radha Krishna, Gopala and others.
 - (b) Famous persons like Gandhiji, Tagore, Netaji and Paramhansa Deva. Neither this nor the other group of models are toys.
 - (c) Soldiers, policemen, women with child in arm or with a pot on head, seated figures of men and boys and old men with nodding heads. These are toys.
 - (d) Animals and birds, and also spiders and beetles imitating mechanical toys.
 - (e) Fruits and vegetables of the old pattern. There were however no examples of *Beneputul*.
2. One stall brought lacquer covered toys and mainly sold vases and toys. They were from outside Bengal.
3. Burnt earth toys made by Kumhars. There were no dolls. There were only toy pots, pans, ovens and other utensils.⁴ There were no dolls, formerly made by Kumhars, of the kind 'Kumoreputul'. There were only three such stalls.
4. Wooden toy figures of animals. These were painted. There were no painted wooden dolls. There were only two stalls.
5. Iron implements were being sold at three stalls along with toy sets of oven and kitchen utensils.
6. Plastic made modern toys were being sold at five stalls and also by three itinerant vendors. There were no porcelain toys on sale. Nor were there any cloth dolls (modern) in stalls.
7. *Sora-shaped* (section of a sphere) toy skin drums carried on bamboo carts and narrow single side open drums were being sold by Muslims who had made them, at two stalls.
8. Paper snakes were being sold at another stall.

9. Itinerant vendors were selling bamboo toy flutes and paper flowers.
10. There were papier mache masks of *chadok*—Hideous human or ghost faces, tigers etc., which were being sold as toys and purchased by boys. These are old type things, and the material used is also old.
11. At two stalls, toy motor cars of wood were being sold.
12. At one stall costly toys of plastic and wood such as toy models of clocks, radios etc., were being sold.
13. Tin-plate swords and shields were sold at one stall. No tin-plate palanquins formerly found in such melas were observed in this or other stalls. Palanquins, it may be noted were in use even forty years ago in Calcutta but are now obsolete, as a mode of transport.

From this brief report you will have an idea as to the availability of the different type of toys in the melas which reflect the demand for the same.

I now request Prof. Roy to say something on this subject.

Prof. Nihar Roy: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I wish to say a few words in connection with Mr. Mookerjee's paper. But before I do so, I would like to say something on the objects of this seminar. If I have understood the objects of the seminar I think they are to deal with social changes and its impact on traditional culture and art and artefact. I believe similar seminars are being held in other parts of the world at the same time. A few months ago when I was in Burma I had to deal with similar things—a similar program which is largely the program of South East Asia. The main objects of these seminars are to study the impact of the social changes on the tradition and culture and I believe we should tackle it not so much from the point of view of purely techniques of traditional art as from the point of view of their forms. These forms, as Prof. Chattopadhyay has said, today show a large number of varieties than we used to see 50 years ago. But as Mr. Mookherji has pointed out, what has now been recognised as most important by practically all students of folk arts, is the existence of the timeless type, which is not affected by social changes and time variation—a type which does not undergo various variations in form and patterns due to social changes and time variation—All the timeless varieties persist and are expected to persist unless there are changes in the basis of the

civilisation itself. Everybody knows today that in different phases of civilisation a time comes when one—a creative artist—has to dip into the collective reservoir.

The artists are conditioned by their environmental changes and they are conditioned to a very large extent. There is no doubt about it, but at times they have to take a dip into the collective reservoir.

It happened in the life of Tagore for instance in his music, in his art forms. Again and again he dipped into this collective reservoir and came back with a renewed freshness and vigour. It is happening today before our very eyes. One of our great leading artists, Sri Jamini Roy for instance and others also have done it. At the same time they are simultaneously conditioned by the social changes that are taking place now. Variations in folk toys originate as Mr. Mookherji pointed out not only today, but earlier. You can see very sophisticated urban terracotta in the Gupta period. About these urban terracotta, Kalidasa speaks. Bana Bhatta also speaks about them. They are changed by social changes. Their forms have changed. They have been changing all through. Look at the Kumartooli dolls. In the 19th century there was a Babu type in Calcutta typical of those days which you can see in the Kumartooli dolls. They have been changing in the Ratha melas at Sealdah or round about Calcutta and in all the village melas. It is very important to remember it. Toys are being created, shaped and made to suit urban tastes. The toys sell in the Sealdah market. There are time variations, and there is nothing to worry about it. When we look at the impact of social changes so far as toys and dolls are concerned, the most serious change is the 'mechanical toys' as Mr. Mookherji described it. These mechanical toys are finished and they are invading the villages. They are being purchased by the daily passengers who flock in the city in their thousands. They purchase them in Dalhousie Square, and from all the markets of Calcutta and take them back home. They are influencing to a certain extent our rural terracotta and toys. I have been in 1951 in one of the melas in Birbhum not very far from Kenduli, and I say that the toys sold there were nothing but translation of the mechanical toys in terms of clay. This is being done, and this will be done as we have known throughout the ages and perhaps throughout the world, though there are certain types which the artists will not accept as the type conditioned by time, by social changes.

It is said that in the timeless type in a sense we can see a change. I do not know whether there is any real change at all, but I can say that at the most it is relatively changing; and that the changeless type is to a certain extent conditioned by time. That is why I would like to say not exactly changeless but relatively changeless. The cult of fertility which is most important came into being at a certain time. It continued till the 19th century in the Bengal villages, but the fertility figures today are changed. For instance, the emphasis on the hips or certain sex symbols, the curve of the fertility symbol, that curve is undergoing attenuation which to my mind is a matter of modern sophistication. To what extent is this ideological change conditioning even such a basic biological conception like fertility? I do not think any research has been made about it, but it is a subject of interest and awaits careful consideration.

There is another type which you find connected with the rituals. They are fast dying out, and some of the types like special animal type were made by the hand, and they were used during the Vrata ceremony. Now certain Vrata classics are connected with that. There was that world, and it is very difficult for us to visualise that world today, and that world shaped certain forms. Those very forms were practised; those very forms are even now made by villagers, but the source of inspiration has gone. I have seen a village potter shaping those very toys, but he does not know the legend connected with it. Perhaps my friends know that when the potters, the village womenfolk, were shaping these toys they used to recite the story as they made it. Now they do not recite the story. That is a very important point, for the impact of the fingers, the mobility or otherwise of the fingers depends on the rhyme or cadence of the story; and the mind that was guided by it, that mind does no longer work with it. This is now mostly mechanical. For how long this ageless type will persist I do not know. If it continues for another 50 years—I do not know—as I said at the beginning whether this ageless type will persist.

These are the few points on which I wanted to speak as I was listening to the paper of S. J. Mookherji. I may say that so far as our present knowledge goes this paper represents the latest knowledge we have about toys and terracotta. I must say a word of congratulation to my ex-student and friend Mr. Mookherji for having presented us with a very nice Paper on the subject.

Vice-Chancellor: Ladies and Gentlemen; in this discussion of traditional forms of art I had expected and I still expect one particular point to be highlighted and attention focussed on that. It is an idea which we have derived from a study of old forms of literature. This literature was very frequently communal in origin and perhaps to a great extent communal in execution. I may perhaps elaborate this idea a little bit. The word 'communal' is used in a different sense—in hatred—now, than it used to mean before. Now, the object of art is an expression of an individual's feeling, his inspiration or his emotions through the medium of something that appeals to our senses, may be senses of hearing, may be senses of sight, may be senses of something else. So, whatever we may call it, art is an individual's emotion or inspiration and when we go back to the mediaeval literature and go back further still, we find that the individual was suppressed to a very great extent by the community. As regards the development of this art, it may be that in the beginning these toys might have been composed by individuals. It was at first done in mural paintings and then shape was given in earth. This went on for centuries. It may be that certain groups of individuals composed these things, or it may be the work of a particular individual. But we have definite evidence that at the time of the first literary composition it was not one individual that composed this particular object of art, but it was a community of individuals—a party. We do not know to what extent this is to be found in other forms of traditional art. In an ancient toy, for example,—well, I do not use the word 'toy' in the specific sense that it is an image of god or goddess that is being made on the occasion of a festival,—an individual makes a toy out of his own imagination and to what extent do we find the traditional art there? How far can we go to examine an image like this being made by an individual? Though one individual makes the toy it was not one individual who is responsible for the toy—but a group of individuals, each one contributing towards the formation of the toy, his little mite to the total composition. Dr. Roy has spoken of the collective reservoir; I shall say not only collective reservoir but collective execution. The joint stock of emotions should be there in a joint endeavour. This I would like to say in this discussion in connection with the various forms of arts. I am sure we can find illustration of it in music, not simply in the

composition of words, but also in the notes and songs. Can we do it so far as toys are concerned? Can we do it for sari borders?

Prof. Nihar Roy: No one man is entirely responsible for these arts. Take for instance how Durga images are made. One man shapes the hand, another the trunk, another colours the body and so on. No one is able to spot as to who has made a particular image. The Kumartuli artist now signs his name under the image but 25 years ago it was considered sacrilegious to put one's name under an image. We know these traditional arts have been practised even in the villages but even the villagers are not immune from this individualistic tendency. Twenty five years ago we used to see that the colourings of the images were left to the women of the family, but toys are being shaped and formed wholly now by one single artist. How long will these traditional arts retain their communal character? If they give it up, it ceases to be communal and it ceases to be traditional art and then we shall have no occasion to hold any such seminars on them.

Prof. Kalyan Ganguli: Mr. Chairman, one point I would like to stress upon in this connection. Our traditional culture is not of a communal type in the sense of the term—as Government understand it or as many people have the idea about communal feeling. If making images of Durga, Siva etc. are considered in this way then there is no help. It is community work.

Vice-Chancellor: Sri Biswanath Banerji will now read his Note on Chitrakars.

NOTE ON CHITRAKARS

SRI BISWANATH BANERJI

This paper deals with the Chitrakars, one of the artisan castes of the village Amdabad in the district of Midnapore. We shall try to depict their economic condition as well as some interesting aspects of their cultural life.

The Chitrakars are also known as "Patuas" or "Patidars". The term chitrakar means picture-maker or painter.

They are one of the nine recognised artisan castes, the others being: Malakar (garland maker), Karmakar (smith), Sankhakar (Conch shell worker), Kundibak or Tantubay (weaver), Kumbhakar (Potter), Sutradhar (Carpenter), Kanayakar and Swarnakar (Goldsmith). There are references to this caste in many ancient Hindu books, but it is very interesting that they reveal a peculiar condition as they live midway between Hinduism and Mahommadanism.

They perform Namaz, celebrate Idd, but do not take beef. Their marriage rites are performed by Kazies according to Islamic rules but the Kazi is not allowed to interfere in any other social affair. Their marriage is strictly restricted to their own group or caste and no marriage takes place with any other Muslim community.

The Chitrakars have retained Hindu names, perform "Sitāla" and 'Viswakarma' Puja, but that is done without the help of priests. This is performed by elderly men of their own caste.

They say that they are descended from Viswakarma and the apsara Ghritachi. They also say that they were degraded by Brahmins for some unknown reason; so, they afterwards adopted Islam which has given them a better status in society.

In the Brahma-Vaibarta Purana we find an account of the cause of their degradation. The exact sloka of the Purana is as follows:—

Vyatikramena citrānām sadyāścitrakarakantathā
patito brahmaśāpena brāhmanānām ca kopatah

which means "Chitrakars for drawing painting untraditionally have just been expelled from society by the angry Brahmins". Anyway,

they retain their traditional occupation that is painting pictures etc. What is peculiar is this, that still they do not accept cooked food and water from Muslims or scheduled caste Hindus. They do not exhibit their scrolls in the houses of both these sections of the population. They accept food and water, only from higher caste Hindus of the locality. They accept fruit and sweets from all castes including the Muslims. But neither the higher castes nor the scheduled castes accept water or cooked food from the chitrakars. The local Mahommadans also do not take cooked food or water from them.

This is so far as their social status is concerned. Let us now describe briefly their economic condition.

Their main business is to exhibit their scrolls and sing the traditional explanatory verses as the scroll is unfolded gradually. The scroll is generally 24 ft. to 50 ft. long and rolled like a film strip. They do not sell the scrolls like art pictures, but earn their livelihood by exhibiting these pictures and singing in accompaniment. These scrolls are looked upon by the chitrakars as their chief wealth. They generally spend Rs. 6 for preparing a scroll. In the village they get rice and vegetable ($\frac{1}{2}$ a poa to $1\frac{1}{2}$ poa of rice i.e., 4 to 12 ozs.) for one performance. On rare occasions, they get a Dhuti or Sari in the towns, or in moffusil areas they get a few annas as remuneration.

The scrolls are made by men. Formerly, for making scrolls they used hand-made paper and for the pictures they had their indigenous colours such as charcoal for black, chalk for white, 'Pat atta' or juice of ripe 'telakucha' (certain local fruit) for red etc. But at present they use ordinary paper and foreign paints for preparing scrolls and painting pictures respectively. (Ref. The Tribes and castes of West Bengal—Census 1951, West Bengal).

The men also make images of Gods and Goddesses during different pujas which fetches them Rs. 3 to Rs. 35 according to the size and shape of the images. In making images of such Gods and Goddesses or scrolls the son or the daughter or the wife assists the chitrakar. The chitrakars help one another in making the images. Here, the helper is never paid in cash; at least he takes his meal there.

To exhibit such scrolls, the chitrakars usually go to the neighbouring villages within a radius of four miles. When cultivation and harvesting is over, generally from the last part of January to March, the men go with their scrolls from village to village. All of my informants used to tour in different villages and towns of Bankura,

Birbhum and different villages of Midnapore. Some also used to go to Baleswar, Jamshedpur etc.

In the village, it is revealed that the chitrakars exhibit scrolls and beg from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The theme or subject-matter of the scroll is taken from :—

1. Ramayana as Sita Harana, Ravanbadha, Lakshman Saktishela.
2. From Bhagbata as Krishnalila, Jagannath;
3. From Mahabharata—as Naramedh Yagna, Sabitri Satyaban, Data Karna etc. and from
4. Manasa Mangala,
5. Chandi Mangala and such other Mangala poems. Each scroll opens with a large-sized portrait of the presiding deity which is followed by a series of pictures illustrating his or her awards or punishment upon mankind. The concluding scene of the main story—is a comedy of rescue etc. Interesting scenes are carefully selected and painted from memory.

The women make toys from clay by freehand modelling or from clay sheets cast in terracotta moulds. These toys are generally sunbaked, sometimes also baked in fire. They make idols of different gods and goddesses, 'alladi' dolls and figures of different birds and animals. These toys have many colours. In colouring these toys also now-a-days foreign colours and paints are used. These toys are not sold in the weekly markets but in the fairs held during Pous or Chaitra Sankranti etc. Price of such toys varies from 2 pice to annas 4. Men sell these toys in the fairs.

The chitrakars have no other profession. But their earning is not sufficient to satisfy even their minimum requirements. They, actually, have to depend on the charity of the villagers. At present, this totally landless artisan group is leading a miserable economic life.

DISCUSSION

Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay : The Note on Chitrakars is now open to discussion.

Prof. Nihar Roy : Today we are discussing this big question of traditional culture, especially traditional art and craft. But speaking on traditional art or craft I am sometimes worried—whether 10 or may be 20 years hence to be more optimistic, we shall have an occasion to hold a seminar like this. I will give a few specific examples. About 6 or 7 miles away from Puri there is a village of Patuas. Sj. Nirmal Kumar Bose must know about them better than I do. I went there for the first time in 1926. The whole village consists of nothing but chitrakars. Between 1926 and 1951, I had been at least to that village a dozen times and each time I went there I found the number of families—of Chitrakars—dwindling. Here is Sj. Benoy Ghose who has covered those villages and he is witness to the fact that in a certain village there are now 6 families of Chitrakars and when I visited that place 11 years ago there were about 30 families, I think it was more than less. Now in another 5 or 6 years from now these 6 families will also vanish. That is the case with Kalighat where in 1925, when I joined the University Post Graduate Classes, there were at least 4 families of really good patuas. Sj. Nandalal Bose and Sj. Jamini Roy collected many pats (scrolls) from this place. There was one artist called Narayan who taught to Sj. Nandalal Bose. Narayan had two sons; the eldest died in 1947 and the next is now a betel-seller in the corner of Kalighat Street.

Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay : I had hoped to hear something more of the effect of the style of painting of our Chitrakars on our modern painters, which is known to have occurred. Sri Jamini Roy for example is a noted exponent of it. After all this profession is referred to in our Sanskrit dramas of the early Christian era. Unfortunately we have not been able to get a painter to take part in the discussion. Else he could have told us of the relation of the satirical drawings of Gaganendranath Tagore with the Chitrakar Art. I would also have liked to hear Sj. Benoy Ghose about his experience in the villages about chitrakars but since he is not speaking let me come to the last item of the agenda, namely, factors leading to changes in border designs of saris.

SARI BORDER CHANGES

PROF. K. P. CHATTOPADHYAY

I would like to say a few words on the particular rural craft which furnished until a few decades ago livelihood to the largest number of artisans in our country. This is handloom weaving. Threads of bast fibre as well as of cotton fibre have been found in the early Mohenjodaro remains. The craft is therefore of very ancient origin. The detailed description of barkfibre cloth, woollens and cotton cloth given in Kautilya's Arthasastra makes it clear that the craft had attained special excellence quite early in different parts of India. Banga and Kalinga are mentioned as two such areas. Barkfibre was also woven in North Bengal to make a good cloth. Improvements were effected in the looms under Muslim rule, but apart from the patronage extended by the Muslim rulers to high grade cloth produced in Bengal, the general pattern of economy of the weavers remained unaffected until modern times. As a matter of fact it did not change much.

The weaver was not a village servant in the same sense as the blacksmith who attended regularly to the needs of the peasantry. But a small colony of weavers generally served a group of villages. The women of the rural households spun thread on their chadka, usually, and brought it to the weaver, who charged a certain amount of paddy for the sizing and another quantity for his labour. Even a decade ago this was done in outlying tribal areas in Orissa where the Patar Pan weavers attended to this work. There were larger colonies, also of weavers—generally near the old towns and river ports. Examples of these are Santipur in Nadia district, Baluchar in Murshidabad district, Radhanagar and Ramjibanpur in Ghatal subdivision of Midnapore district and for silk textiles, Vishnupur in Bankura district. Specialisation occurred in most of these areas and the creative border designs and patterns that developed, remained limited to the places of origin. The kharika (tooth-pick) duray (stripe) or fine striped sari of Santipur, the delicate check pattern of Ramjibanpur and the ovoid floral or conventional Kalka design on the body of the cloth of Baluchar saris are examples, illustrative of such specialisation. I have not mentioned

the far-famed Dacca Muslin and the embroidery type border and similarly worked body of the saris produced there, as superfluous.

With the advent of British rule, this craft was hard hit—at first by forcible contracts at low rates by the factors and employees of the East India Company, by boycott and legislation against Indian cloth in Great Britain and finally by unrestricted import of cloth produced in power looms in the United Kingdom. The competition of imported cloth affected the condition of weavers in villages only when Lancashire could send dhuties and saris woven with comparatively high count yarns and with moderately ornate borders for the women's apparel. We may surmise what happened a little over three generations ago in our rural areas by observation of what has happened a generation ago or a little less earlier, in tribal areas. I shall note as an illustration the process of change as observed in Mayurbhanj and elsewhere in the Santal villages.

In the outlying villages in Mayurbhanj, away from Baripada, Santal women were observed during 1938-41 to be wearing at festivals the saris woven by Patar Pans with the beautiful traditional designs. In ordinary daily wear, the coarse handloom cloth with simple border was in use. Only a few women occasionally wore millmade saris. Observation in villages in Muruda area as well as in the weekly hāt or fair held at Rokoni and Chitradā agreed in this respect. Near Baripada however, millmade saris were very much in evidence. In the Santal Parganas, this changeover had started earlier, and it was with difficulty that I was able to collect specimen saris with traditional designs. As a matter of fact I had to run to a dozen fairs and to order them specially before I could get them. As is wellknown, the district of Santal Parganas was built up largely by cutting off slices from Birbhum and Bhagalpur, both of which areas have been inhabited mainly by Hindu peasantry for over at least a thousand years. Also missionary activity started in the last century in this district, which had come under British rule, a century earlier. Mayurbhanj, on the other hand, remained a feudatory state under a Maharaja and was a backward area remaining until the second quarter of this century outside the national movements that shook the rest of India. The reasons for adoption of millcloth by tribal women were three-fold:—

- (1) the texture of the millmade saris was finer and the design of borders more varied. The design of border woven in

the village had very little variation; also the cloth was coarse.

- (2) Women of the admired middle class of the Hindus wore saris of fine texture.
- (3) Formerly, the basis of obtaining cloth had been barter. Due to changes in the village economy and also of the country at large, many tribals were selling their labour for cash. Hence cash purchase of millmade saris was possible.

Similar changes had occurred in the case of village folk including their womenfolk in Bengal and elsewhere, three generations earlier. Similar factors had operated in their case also, with similar results.

In consequence of the adoption of millmade saris, the weavers of coarse cloth lost their livelihood in large measure. They were thrown on land, and this affected the condition also of the skilled weavers indirectly. Weaving is a family occupation, where the other members of the unit also help. Again, each weaver family had some land on which food was grown. While coarse cloth was in constant requirement throughout the year, the finer cloth had a seasonal sale. So long as the weaver families had some reserve like a fair sized plot of land to support them while waiting for the seasonal sale, the skilled weaver retained his independence.

When however, a large number of weavers were thrown on the limited land available, this reserve was destroyed. In consequence the skilled weaver had to depend on the advances given by the mahajans who had capital enough to wait for the seasonal sale. Exact details of the earlier condition are not available although the facts noted are on record. But it is known that even in 1940 handloom weavers were producing 45 per cent. of the cloth woven in Bengal. A survey of the condition of handloom weavers in Bengal was conducted by the Government of Bengal and the report was published in 1941. We find in this report of 1941 that a good many of the weavers' handlooms had in this way passed into the hands of the mahajans; and that 75 per cent. of the craftsmen were wage labourers, or otherwise dependent on the mahajans. Early in 1943, just before the famine, I carried out an enquiry in Santipur, one of the well-known centres of production of high grade dhuti and sari. It was found that most of the men were working on looms as wage labourers. They said on

being asked that they could even then weave the beautiful designs of saris which had once made their work famous in Bengal. Actually, when orders were placed, they showed by weaving one loomful of saris of fine texture and border design that they had not lost their skill. They stated however that they had to follow the directions of the mahajans in the matter of designs. I found that only one weaver was weaving a fine grade sari with a beautiful border. The rest of the saris being woven had somewhat loud designs of a comparatively crude pattern. A visit to shops in Calcutta for checking up of Santipur saris confirmed that these were the prevailing patterns woven.

It may be noted here, that due to urbanisation under modern industrial conditions, large numbers of the better off families had moved to Calcutta. In this city, due to modern means of communication, saris of various designs not only from different parts of Bengal, but from different provinces of India were available to the purchasers. Variety in design and novelty was here also a factor in reducing the sale of the Bengal products. It was inevitable in these circumstances for those who controlled production to seek for additional markets for these saris. A new class, poorer than the earlier patrons had grown up who wanted to wear Santipur saris. But their purse was leaner, and their tastes were satisfied with florid designs. The mahajans observed the kind of design in mill saris—no longer from Lancashire, but from Bombay and Ahmedabad which were in demand, and tried to copy these in the handloom products. The texture was kept thin but had to be made inferior, by reducing the amount of thread used, and the design was crudely woven, as fine work was too expensive. The full quota of thread was ruled out for the same reason. I visited Maldah also and found the conditions to be unsatisfactory there for silk weavers. As a matter of fact, I visited other areas also. Maldah had not been noted so much for its fine designs. On the other hand, Vishnupur in Bankura had been noted for its fine designs on silk. How these factors affected the designs of the silk handloom products in this area may be judged from the remarks of Sri Sudhansu Roy in his report on the Artisans of West Bengal and their Craft in 1951 (West Bengal Census Report, 1951—Volume on Tribes & Castes). He states that in Vishnupur on the occasion of his visit in 1951 he found that the silk clothes “were woven in vulgar designs copied from third grade mill woven cotton saris imported from Ahmedabad”. I do not want to make such a

harsh statement, but certainly the designs of fine saris were very limited.

It is a good sign that the cottage industry department of the Government of West Bengal has started helping in revival of the old artistic designs. A genuine revival can however occur only with full economic rehabilitation of the weaver families. They need economic security. Then only can they give play to their artistic sense, unhampered by mahajans. The detailed program of work needed for such rehabilitation has been set out by me in a book published after the famine of 1943 on the basis of the survey then carried out and need not be recapitulated.* I should like to add that I have not purposely referred to experimental and odd new designs tried which had an ephemeral existence. I have also not referred for the same reason to recent adoptions of artistic designs by some mills from Alponas and drawings.

* A Plan for Rehabilitation in Bengal, by K. P. Chattopadhyay and R. K. Mukherjee, Calcutta, 1946.

DISCUSSION

Sri Kalyan Ganguly : Prof. Chattopadhyay has spoken on very important points in regard to changes in the patterns of sari borders. It may be pointed out that the designs on cotton textile are changing, and some designs have been taken recently from one of the paintings of Ajanta. It may be noted that with the change of time the patterns are also changed. Nevertheless having an eye on the tastes of the society the designs have changed. In recent times some of the Baluchar saris which are set in traditional design began to show Europeans seated in cushions and using the hubble-bubble; and then we noticed the introduction of steam engines and also steamers.

What is the reason of this change from the aesthetic tradition is a point which should be very seriously studied. It shows something inherent in the aesthetic life of the ordinary people. Two hundred years of British rule have changed the fundamental outlook of the people; one result has been very drastic changes in the borders of the sari. I find reasonable improvement of late in the colour of the saris that are being worn by Bengalis. I am sure it is definitely towards improvement. I hope this will undergo more changes when more effective changes will be introduced. In this respect it should also be pointed out that in all these three subjects on which there have been discussion today, namely, Potters, Chitrakars and Weavers, I think the weavers are much better off; they are on a better economic level than the rest, because they are in receipt of more patronage. The Chitrakars and Potters are eking out a miserable existence. At least in the matter of sari borders this traditional art should be better patronised.

Prof. Nihar Roy : The previous speaker has used the word "aesthetic" in relation to traditional arts and crafts. It is a big question. Of course when we come to textile—an inevitable word—designs, I think it is better that we do not use the word "aesthetic." Sometime ago we were discussing about toys. I think there is a little difference between textile designs and the toys. These dolls and toys are connected with patterns of life. We must recognise once for all that these toys at least were not brought into existence to satisfy our aesthetic taste. These things were not made to serve any aesthetic

purpose. They were connected with a pattern of life—in the rituals etc., and many other things played important parts and they were brought into existence as a result of the demand of that pattern of life. If certain toys and dolls were kept on the niches, as mere exhibits—that would have been a different matter. But these toys and dolls have not been kept to satisfy somebody's sensual pleasure of the eyes. When we are discussing textiles, it is certainly another matter. There the question of contemporary taste comes in. I am loathe to use the term "taste". It is an English translation of the Bengali word or Sanskrit word *ruchi*. Unfortunately there are some words which cannot be translated and *ruchi* is one such. When we say contemporary *ruchi* it does not exactly mean contemporary taste.

The biggest collection of textiles that one can find anywhere in the world are in the museums. I have visited some museums of the other countries where one could see the designs of several centuries ago. I have also visited our own Indian museum. I do not know how many of us have seen the artistic textile collection of this museum. There one can see designs which can be traced from the 13th century onwards. Within those pieces one can see designs which remind of those discovered from the ruins of Egypt. There are these textile designs of all parts of the country of India. There is another way to find out the history of textile designs. We have a large number of manuscript paintings and mural paintings where one can see the designs in colour. One can find the designs that were prevalent during the Pal and Sen dynasties. There are paintings which date from the 16th century. You can also see some of the textiles of contemporary Indonesia. Gujarati designs are also found there. Gujarati people, we know, used to visit Indonesia during the 10th century, right up to 16th century. Even today Indians who are in Cambodia and Laos are from Gujarat and Cutch and from Ahmedabad. These designs reflect social changes—contemporary taste as we have said. We could also see the designs that were prevalent during the Portuguese trouble time—when Portuguese thieves used to come near the coast of India. You find there designs of Abyssinian soldiers.

I shall now discuss the forms and patterns that are being revived today. The saris are responding to the contemporary taste of two dimension forms. The Baluchar sari for example has ornamental design in two dimension form. The Gujarati sari onward from the

13th and 14th century is of two dimension form. There are other forms also, for instance the Santipur design. Whether it is an animal or a horse or an elephant or a bear does not matter. The subject is reduced to two dimensions, and the composition is characterised by sharp lines and angles. That is a kind of textile design which was not common to the whole of India. It existed mostly in Western India, and the patterns we find in Sambalpur among weavers subsidised by the Orissa Government or in Patna subsidised by the Bihar Government or in Calcutta subsidised by the West Bengal Government are mostly two dimension forms. You will notice most of them in the towns, and my friend Sri Nirmal Kumar Bose must have noticed them. All these revivalist tendencies, all these revived forms or patterns are never used by the womenfolk of the villages. In Bihar and West Bengal these saris are not used by the village women because they are costly. An ordinary peasant cannot afford to pay the price, but simpler saris are cheaper, and their women use them just as Gujarati villagers would not take to any other sari design than their traditional patterns. Sambalpur has made some of the designs popular. The other State Governments are making some other designs. So far it is good. But the village people do not use them. They are mostly used and purchased by town folk, by the urban population. This is very symptomatic. The jamdani saris, the Baluchar saris, Murshidabad saris, Santipur saris were formerly never used by anybody else. These forms and patterns perhaps satisfied the taste of women belonging to the higher grade of the society. As I said, the question of price is a point but there may have been other points. At any rate if you go by the manuscript paintings of the 13th or 14th century of West Bengal, the traditional patterns are of three dimensions. These patterns are not in two dimensions. Some of the patterns you can see in some of the paintings, but as a rule in traditional types and forms, Bengali genius went in for three dimension forms. This popularity of the three dimension pattern up to the 13th or 14th century can be explained very well, but this popularity of the second dimension in textile designs, not only textile designs but in contemporary paintings, is worth notice. You know that in Byzantine painting the main form is in two dimensions. You can see that in the playing cards—the King, Queen and Jack. We know that the origin was the nomadic pattern of South Arabia and Asian plateau, but of late since the third quarter of the last century and especially after the first

world war this preference for the second dimension pattern and design has gained worldwide popularity; and today textile owners even in Europe prefer second dimension form which is more popular than the traditional three dimension pattern of the Renaissance and post-Renaissance period. Is there any deeper reason for this? Today throughout India the dominating textile pattern reduces itself to the second dimension, to the angularity of forms, to the pointedness and sharpness of the lines. This is the dominating character.

I may be prejudiced but I have a feeling that this has been, to an extent at least, the result of certain historical studies. From about the beginning of this century but more intensely from about 1915-16 onwards when we studied the Nomadic arts and forms there were large scale popularisation of these arts. This large scale popularisation started from 1910 or so and the volume increased. These printed designs and forms were recovered from the lost civilisations and these designs were scattered throughout Europe. Very recently—from 1930 onwards—they became more and more known in India. I am not trying to pat the backs of stalwarts, but they have played a little part in this. They have brought before the public these examples and they took them to the urban areas. But the trouble is that nobody cares to enquire about them. Government do not care what the calico designs were in 16th, 17th or 18th centuries. Who cares to know the designs of Baluchar saris, who wants to know the West Indian forms and designs? Only in Gujerat this desire to know did not die. In Bengal it died. Even in the South this was more or less dead but today it has been resurrected. This resurrection has been to some extent perhaps due to certain interests, being taken by esoteric or scholastic groups, I should say. It may be due to that, but I may be wrong. However, the big question remains that these textile designs change under changed situation. That is the significance. Here in this hall we find some textile designs—on the wall. There have been some changes from the traditional type. However, these designs were dictated by certain principles of utility. As you know the card-like borders of saris are meant to hang from the waist downward. This design was created to suit a purpose in a particular place. It was made heavier and weightier according to the quality of the thread used. The size of the design was also conditioned by principles of utility, but today we take a different border. Though there have been some changes in the designs towards revivalism, it is meaningless revivalism. One design serves one

purpose. The design of a sari border cannot be the design of a table cloth. But we are utilising the same design for table cover. In the name of revivalism therefore we are doing senseless things. We use sari border designs on the door curtains. The design of the lower border of a sari is used in a curtain of a window. The whole balance is probably lost. Because the lower border is heavy and the thing—a curtain on the window has its upper border like it—becomes top-heavy.

Prof. Nirmal Bose : Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I have just a few observations to make in this connection. Changes take place as the modes of the people change. I will give you an illustration about designs that have changed. One of the very useful things that the Anthropological Department of our University are doing is that they are investigating—or making an investigation, in the changes of names of men and women and also of shops and establishments and you will be intrigued to trace the reason of the changes—how the nomenclatures of the individuals have changed. My grandmother's name was Gajendragamani. In my younger days I failed to notice any significance of the name but in those old days these were the kind of names were used. We come across names like Khiroda Sundari, Gajendragamani, long-winded words which were perhaps perfectly in order in that society when they lived; when elephants used to parade on the streets, bullockcarts were on the roads, when things were decorated heavily, when heavy ornaments were in tune with the other things that were used then. Now, the whole thing has been changed. By and by Indian people and culture have changed and the names have also changed. Under British rule they were having names like Victoria Sundari, Jubilee Sundari and names of the like. Nobody was surprised then to hear those names. In tracing our modes we eventually come to a period when we find that this culture has also been changed. I will not call it a 'revolution', for I am a Gandhian, but only say that a change took place. Now the names are in two letters, Roma, Uma, Riti, Niti. No more of the Khiroda Sundari type nor like Victoria. These names, like Roma, Uma etc. are very delicate. Those times of elephants have gone and we are having these names, as if our new modern girls won't be able to carry those gigantic names. They have therefore these small names.

The point that I want to make out is this, namely, that not only do names change from time to time but they always change in accordance with other tastes, in accordance with the taste in the lines and curves

of the body, in accordance with the taste in other matters as well. This is actually borne out by another investigation. We are carrying on in the Department of Anthropology an enquiry into certain changes in the names of shops. For instance, ever since my long years in Calcutta, I have been trying to trace the changes in the name of shops. There was a shop which was originally called "Grand Hotel". Of course you are familiar with the "Grand Hotel", in Chowringhee but here I am referring to the "Grand Hotel (Garanhata)". It used to serve crabs and lobsters for particular dishes. In the signboard hung up in front of it "Grand Hotel (Garanhata)" there is not one single letter of English. Everybody was a perfect Bengali in Chitpur Road. The words "Grand Hotel (Garanhata)" were written in Bengali script and did not seem to be outrageous, because our whole mind was full of Garibaldi, Mazzini, and other heroes of the West. Then suddenly we recovered a good deal of our self-confidence and became very patriotic. I need not go into details about the reasons. There was a meat shop in that area which is still there. But the owner has changed his sign board. Then there was a barber shop. Originally the name of that barber shop was "Modern Hairdressing Saloon". Not one word of it is in the Bengali language. It is a perfect English name and it was written out in English. Later came a time when there were people who were determined to go to jail, to end British rule and there were people who were not willing to go to jail but who wanted to show their sympathy, and therefore the same shop immediately had a new sign board in which was written in Bengali Script "Haripada Kesha Silpa Asram". The shop became completely renovated. I have tried recently to find out how the new life of the proletariats is shaping itself in the matter of shop names.. Formerly, these Indianised names—call it reactionary if you wish to, found vindication from classical sources in "Haripada Kesha Asram" and a host of names of that kind. But the new life for the proletariats, the new Kisan in the modern world has led to the proletarianisation of names. A shop which was originally known as "Ready Dyeing and Cleaning Company" suddenly after the leftist forces gained strength has renovated its signboard and got the name "*Chat Dholai*". (Quick wash). In the old days there was no *chat*, i.e., hurry. Everything was very slow; everything went in bullock carts. Now in the days of motor cars even a washerman's shop has the name of its type which is divorced from the former English name and partly divorced from the current spoken

vernacular. How is this? In this way scientists are also stepping in. Formerly, an ordinary meat shop had no sign board but today we find that due to invasion of industrialisation there are new types. I found one which meets the eye and which has this fantastic name, namely, "Protein shop". Only yesterday I came across a man who was selling *ghugni*. He was saying 'vitamin *ghugni*'. The term is extremely scientific, but the product is as much divorced from vitamin as a brick. The point that I want to make out is that when tastes change, some of the considerations which bring about this change will possibly have an element of sympathy, whether that sympathy springs from an inner rise of self-confidence or probably from a notion of taking refuge in a culture which belongs to the distant past or distant future.

Miss Jyotirmayee Sarma : Prof. Chattopadhyay has said that with the disappearance of old patterns of sari borders, Santipur saries have gone down a little in the desire of the womenfolk of Calcutta. But other saries are more popular. For instance, we have revived the Dhakai sari (Dacca). Now we have got Benarashi Dhakai, Madrasi Dhakai, etc. They are making imitation of the Dhakai sari. Dhonekhali sari is also a favourite. I do not want to go into details about the names of saries, but I want to point out that there is a revival of sari patterns. There is a great demand in the market for artificial silk. Some of our people are happy that the price of artificial silk has gone down, and also that handloom cotton saries are designed according to the latest designs.

Again the saries which used to be worn by our grand mothers are not available in the market. So one cannot wear it, even if one wishes to. Other types of sari—*pachaperay*—checks near the hip, you cannot find in the market. So even if one wants to wear the age-old traditional saries, one cannot have them in the market.

There is another point. In those times when our mothers or grandmothers used to wear heavy saries, they did not have to move about so freely as we now have to. Therefore, they could afford to wear those heavy saries but we cannot afford to wear these heavy saries as they are so heavy, as we travel by tram and bus and on foot, in the streets. So we have to take to plain saries.

Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay, (Chairman) : Gentlemen, we now adjourn today. I thank the various speakers who have participated in today's conference and contributed to its success. We meet again

tomorrow at 10-30 a.m. here. We shall discuss tomorrow changes in traditional forms of music. There will be some illustration by tape-recording. I hope you will all take part in tomorrow's discussion and make it a success.

(The conference then adjourned for the day).

Proceedings of the Second Conference on the Study of Traditional Culture held at the ground floor hall of the Institute of Jute Technology, 35, Ballygunge Circular Road, Calcutta, on Saturday, the 28th April, 1956.

(Attendance was not separately noted).

Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay : Ladies and gentlemen, we have been waiting for Dr. Versluys who is the representative of the UNESCO here, but as I understand that he has been detained elsewhere and will be late, we are beginning our programme now. There will be a slight alteration in the programme. First, Prof. Somen Bandyopadhyay will read his paper on " Baul songs of Bengal and their modern forms ".

BAUL SONGS OF BENGAL AND THEIR MODERN FORMS

PROF. SOMEN BANDYOPADHYAY

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, it is in the shape of songs that literature finds its origin in every country. And not only that; songs occupy a most important position in the life of the people of every country. It is the ever-fresh and ever-delightful current of songs flowing in various and numerous channels that has flooded the human soul with perennial joy in all the different countries of the world. Folk literature and folk songs, in particular, constitute a most significant and invaluable asset of the national life of every country. In fact, it is in these folk songs that we find the most genuine evidence of the true history of the nation as well as of the spiritual traditions of the people. It is here that the soul of the country manifests itself. So in order to establish an intimate touch with the nation's spiritual life, we must devote our attention to this aspect of our literature. This evidence is not to be found in our so-called history so full of the stories of kings and queens, and of battles and wars; it is a fact which we know but do not realise; which we have learnt but do not recognise at all. Songs have been ringing throughout this Bengal of ours since time immemorial. Songs have been born in every hamlet of Bengal since the earliest ages. Kirtans, Bhatialies, Agamanies and Bijoya songs, Jari songs, Sari songs sung by cattle herders and carters; there cannot be any guess as to the numbers and varieties of songs which have been born in this land of ours. But it is the Baul song which has gained the greatest fame throughout Bengal by dint of its spiritual content and magic of music and has thus obtained the greatest and highest seat in our spiritual world. The Baul songs are sung in East Bengal so full of rivers and rivulets, creeks and canal and tanks, as well as in the wide expanses of West Bengal on its dry, hard rocky, reddish soil. The wandering Bauls in their own distinctive garbs have roamed from place to place, sometimes singly and sometimes again in groups. Their strange, quaint, wistful voice in song has entered into the inmost soul of the people, to the accompaniment of the *ektara* (single stringed guitar). By virtue of the glory and the glamour of their messages the

Baul songs occupy the highest places in the sphere of the poetry of Bengal. Let us here briefly quote our Poet Rabindranath's comments on this subject.

"I have heard a few such Baul songs which never find their equals in respect of artlessness of diction, depth of feeling and keenness of tune. In them mingle philosophic wisdom, literary creation and depth of religious devotion. I do not believe that it is ever possible to find such uniqueness in any other sphere of folk literature".

The Baul's message is as simple as his music is artless. The songs are short and brief; though so concise in extent, their value is not insignificant at all. So many poets and so many poems have appeared and disappeared, yet the Baul has kept the flow of his life intact, inspite of everything; he has not vanished as yet.

In accordance with the laws of nature, these Baul songs of ours have like the folk music of every country, undergone numerous changes in character and content. Perhaps they do not retain their original purity. But from historical perspective even this evolution in many cases possesses a profound value in itself; for through it alone does the genuine nature of this people's spiritual growth and of the flow of the nation's life reveal itself.

Of course it is necessary to mention at the outset that the Baul songs are quite distinct from the other folk songs of Bengal. These do not portray the daily life of the common people as do the ordinary folk-songs; for instance jari songs, sari songs, boatmen's songs, herder's songs, peasant's songs, can thoroughly and vividly portray social life. This the Baul songs can never do; what is more, there are many Bengali folk songs associated with religious life, but Baul songs cannot be included in the same class with them. And although the Agamani and Bijoya songs or Vaisnava lyrics are associated with religion or with our Gods and Goddesses, yet they hold up the mirror to the social life of Bengal.

The special feature of Baul songs is that they are purely philosophical poems, that is, they are not direct transcripts of life, but a criticism or analysis of the entity of life itself. So these Baul songs, as they are not palpably pictorial like other folk songs, and as they are purely philosophical as well as musical, they have not, with the change of the pattern of social life, undergone so many changes as can be seen in other spheres. But they have, beyond doubt, been subject to some transformation and the purely original form of Baul song is not always

kept intact. But if the modern songs which in the fashion of the Baul songs have given expression to the diverse modes of life and habits of the rural life, are called also Baul songs, then after adopting here the wider definition of Baul we may dwell on the modern Baul songs. But before that, some discussion on the true nature of the old Baul songs is pertinent.

The Baul philosophers in their songs, have described the nature of life itself. Here it must be said that the Bauls are not escapists from life. In their songs, instructions are given to take as a matter of course life with all its joys and sorrows, vicissitudes and disillusionments. The Baul has not approved of the doctrine of inaction and has bitterly criticised the kind of religious life which is based on rites and rituals. His opinion is "Take the diversities of life as a matter of course, never be daunted and dispirited. Do not delude yourself into the illusion,—I alone am the Lord," but "pin your faith and depend on the central forces of the Universe" whom the Baul has called the "Man of my Heart." Here we find an agreement of this idea of the Baul with the philosophy of the Gita. Srikrishna says "It is the proud man who due to his ignorance, thinks himself to be the Lord."

The Baul worships no Gods or Goddesses. He is always out in quest of one who is within his own self, and whom he calls 'the Man of my Heart.'

One characteristic of the Baul is that here there is no sectarian conflict. This Sadhana (religious quest) has created such a liberal sphere that here everybody is equal, irrespective of Hindu or Muslim, high or low, the literate or the illiterate.

In the social life of Bengal as well as India this is particularly important. The unification of the Hindu and the Muslim religions, which has been effected by the Baul song, is indeed a marvellous thing. Many Muslims are among the most famous Bauls of our country and their songs have highly enriched the wealth of the Baul songs of Bengal.

The Bauls began to develop and flourish after the 16th century. In the 19th century we come across some very famous Bauls. As the Baul has continued to occupy a very significant position in the realm of the Bengali music through this very long period, we still in our rural life in the most modern period find a tendency to compose songs on the basis of the Baul tune and technique. And it is to be remembered in this connection that the most highly enriched branch of the folk songs

has influenced the composition of songs in modern highly cultured Bengal's literature.

Modern Baul songs are of two types. The first is the type of the pure or unmixed that has undergone periodic changes in the sphere of expression. That is to say, the theme is the same whereas the nature of expression has met with change. From the linguistic point of view the songs have gained greatly in modernness inasmuch as the figures of speech and similes have been taken from the various spheres of contemporary life. These changes go a long way to fascinate the curious mind. The changes at places are particularly interesting. The Baul songs have elucidated the spiritual truths by means of various similes. In the ancient songs the similes are sometimes adopted from the realm of Nature. The pictures have been chosen from the rivers and streams, from the trees and plants and other objects of Nature. But in the modern songs these have been taken from the new familiar environments of life. Modern Science has in a great measure altered our old rural life. The speedy changes and new systems during British rule specially created a great surprise and curiosity in the minds of the rustic people. The luxurious pomp and glitter of city life with its railways, manufacturing centres, aeroplanes and cinemas have created a stir in the sub-conscious minds of the rustic people. Whatever they have seen with their curious and amazed eyes, they have, most probably, used unconsciously as materials in the sphere of figures and similes. That is why in the modern songs, instead of taking the rivers and trees, we find the post office, railways, aeroplanes and the like have been used as symbolic words. Needless to say, these similes are in many cases pregnant with suggestion whereby the expressiveness has been enhanced in a great degree. Even the Deha-Tatva (Body as Universe and seat of the Lord) which is the theme of the Baul songs has been unhesitatingly explained by means of modern similes. "Blessed indeed is the master mason who has built such a superb mansion, most magnificent in this art of construction. Where does that Master mason reside? There are three supporting pillars. They also are quite perfect in all respects. There are five most beautiful chambers of five different colours and five different varieties. There are nine doors here, all of them quite perfect. There are innumerable windows and casements. The mansion is three and a half cubits long. But all the fourteen worlds are included. The wall of the mansion is composed of seven buildings and within it there are the inner apartments. It is only the wise who

can enter therein. It is quite impossible for others to get into it. This mansion is quite safe and secure. It is a six storeyed building. And in the centre there is the Temple's inner shrine. The brightest gem sheds its light day and night, and the Lord of the mansion dwells therein."

or,

Brother, who ever cares who goes out of it or who
stays on :

This life is indeed a railway train,
It does not trouble itself with the question of
starting and stopping.

Luggages are loaded or unloaded;

I do not care to find that out.

As for myself, I proceed on as I please along
my own pathway

or,

If you want to post your letters, go to the
post-office itself.

And it is the Chief Manager of the Head Office who has often been selected as the symbol of the great unknown instead of Kings and Emperors.

In a few other Baul songs the inner doctrine is the Pure Baul Doctrine itself. But these have been composed against the various numerous conflicts of the contemporary social life, and these have endeavoured to prove and illustrate the futility of the struggles and conflicts of social life. Needless to say, these have served to maintain in the hearts of the people a healthy atmosphere in respect of life.

Let us quote here a song composed by Madan, a Modern Baul of Birbhum. "Temples and shrines and mosques have entirely covered the paths leading up to you.

O friend, I hear your call but I cannot proceed towards you.

The gurus and the mursheds hinder my journey.

The gates are locked up by innumerable locks, the

Purana, the Koran, the rosaries and the garlands.

The sectarian garbs constitute the greatest trouble and

Madan weeps in vain.

If the same water which should soothe our souls must burn
up the whole world, where shall we find a spot to stand on.
Tell me thou, Guru.

Your doctrine of sameness and Union has been reduced to division and discord ''.

Just as the sorrows of the tyrannies of social life and the tragedies of Bengal homes have found their voice in the Agamani and Bijoya songs of our Shyama Sangeets, just as the innumerable joys and griefs of the flow of our life throughout the ages and the political sufferings have manifested themselves in the Gambhira folk songs, so also have the intensely painful experiences of life been expressed in these modern Baul songs.

I have noticed this characteristic in the numerous Baul lyrics which I have collected after wandering through the villages of Bengal during the last few years. I have been intensely startled and astonished when I have heard these Baul lyrics in the solitary villages of West Bengal. These songs of the rural poets express most vividly the experiences of his personal life and the consciousness of the entire rural folk and their sorrows and sufferings.

Let us quote one of these songs here :—

Alas, due to our ill-luck
Duhshāshan is seated on the throne today;
Fire burns everywhere,
In homes and meadows and fields,
And why this fire enters into our stomachs?

The changed economic conditions in the villages are reflected in this songs. A few other songs reveal the sense of pessimism and frustration created by poverty. When he thinks of the approaching last day of his life, and gives vent to his apathy, his songs disclose the weakness of a soul defeated in the battle of life. The constant theme of all these compositions is that when death is the last consummation of life, why should we feel aggrieved for the sorrows of our existence? He wants to escape now the problem of life. With his cowardly patience he would silently accept the arrows and slings of outrageous fortune. Needless to say that this is the theme of other lyrics of this type also. The philosophic outlook here is different from that of the older Baul song of traditional type.

But there are a few lyrics of another variety with which we shall conclude our present discourse. There is no such escapism in these songs. A bold, self-assertive course is manifest in these poems. It is a song of victory offered to life in the midst of Death. Here the destitute poet is expressing his intense contempt and his protest against tyranny and oppression and is at the same time cherishing a most firm and determined resolution at heart. There is no cheap sentimentalism and excitement in these songs. There is considerable restraint in the manner of expression, and the sentiment also is free from morbidity. But a firm spiritual strength can be clearly felt through them all. Let us quote one of these poems here:—

What fear shall I cherish now?

I have lost everything, the Dweller within

knows it all,

Does the man dying of starvation ever

think of losing

His food? Who can ever rob

The naked man of his dress?

The bold and courageous note which rings through this poem is an expression of an outlook that will infuse strength in every heart, and releasing from a blind fatalism and hopeless cheerless listless apathy, lead the minds of the people forward towards life's victory in every sphere. Here again is a new outlook revealed in the Baul song.

DISCUSSION

Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay : Sj. Suresh Chakrabarty will now tell us something. I think he needs no introduction. His contribution to music is too well-known.

Prof. Suresh Chakrabarty : Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I shall try to give you an estimate as to what has taken place so far as changes are concerned in these songs. The paper just read is a very illuminating one. I will not take up all the points dealt with in the paper but I shall take up only one point. The ideas in Baul songs can be translated into actual life. It is not merely thought of, it is practised also. In our country there are many people who are not Bauls by profession but actually lead the life of Bauls. We find that a great deal of changes occurred during the decay of Buddhism in India. In those days some Siddha Gurus or Yogis described in the Charya-padas some processes, by following which it was said one could attain the highest realisation of life. Subsequently the Sahajiyas came who regarded the human body as the emblem of the whole creation and declared that in order to find the highest truth one need not go outside one's own body and need not go in search of God even. Hence the highest that a man can aspire for is the ideal man or which is called a Sahaj Manus—Man of the Heart. We find that the Vaishnava Cult influenced the Bauls subsequently to some extent, although Vaisnavism has nothing to do with Bauls. Of course later on there was a compromise through which devotional spirit and absolute truth, could meet each other without a clash.

The mention of a railway engine or a motor car in a modern Baul song and their absence in old ones does not necessarily show a material change in the way of thinking of a Baul. The Bauls of the 18th century did not mention the railway engine or motor cars or post offices as imageries in their songs as these things were not in existence then.

The main trend of thought is still persisting. We know that the whole object of the Baul is to tell the people of thoughts to which generally in our worldly life we are not accustomed, and therefore every song of this type has been composed in what we call 'Rupak' something like allegory. But this allegory is not difficult for us to

understand. When Bauls go to the village streets, they meet the people there, who easily understand them and heartily receive them.

There is another force in the cult of the Baul—for instance, the Sufi. This has had some influence on the Baul, and in some places there are Sufi Bauls, *i.e.*, Auls who are akin to Bauls. There we find a compromise of Islamic philosophy of the Sufi with the Vedanta philosophy of the Hindus; and in that union we find a happy sign. Therefore in some places, for instance in Maizbhandar in Chittagong, they have music festivals at which gather both Hindus and Muslims—to listen to the songs and appreciate them. I think there should be a careful study of Bauls.

Sri Gopal Halder : I can hardly add anything to what has been said by Mr. Chakrabarty, but I expected him to speak more on the tunes and technique of Baul, because he is an expert on that. Of course, to a great section of our people philosophy comes first, but Mr. Chakrabarty will kindly consider whether this philosophy is not older even than the philosophy of such thinkers who can be called Kabir-panthi in Northern India. They all belong to the same tradition, to the same school. I believe that the records are not always preserved in our so-called Sanskrit and other literature. There are references to people who went about singing and preaching in the Upanishadas. This thing went on developing and in course of time was taken up by other people.

Mr. Chakrabarty has rightly referred to Sufi-ism, and this we would like to be emphasised, namely, the contribution of Sufi philosophy, at least as it has developed in Bengal and in India. The Bauls to a great extent got rid of idolatry. I do not speak in condemnation of idolatry, but we know that they could get rid of the images very easily. I think it is due to the inspiration of Sufi philosophy and Sufi cult which prevails in large parts of Bengal, and which probably prevails elsewhere in India also today though they do not know it so well. Of course they draw inspiration from the same source. No line can however be drawn between Sufi-ism and other mystical forms that prevail in Bengal.

As regards present day changes, I think they are taking up imagination from present day developments. They have been doing it all along, but up to this day they have not changed their inner core of philosophy; To say that because of modern developments these Bauls are changing very radically is not proper. The Bauls are always ready

to take things from nature as well as from life. That is proved by the fact that they have their images and similes from the things that they see around them.

Prof. Nirmal Bose : Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, there is only one point on which I want to draw your attention, namely, the fact that the Bauls discarded the idolatry which is associated with Hinduism and accepted as the symbol of worship the human body instead of the body which is made of clay. It is a very significant departure from the orthodox pattern of Hinduism. The symbolism shifted from earthen images to the image which we have in our own body. But unfortunately this particular development of Baul philosophy was limited to esoterics only. It was only after the 19th century when consciously we introduced a large element of humanism and rationalism of the West into our Indian civilisation. For the time being I do not want to be called a provincial though I might say that these incorporations took place in Bengali culture and not in the culture of the Uttar Pradesh. After this introduction of rationalism and humanism of the West which came in the wake of Western education, we find a new meaning in the Baul philosophy. Our interest in the Baul philosophy was reinforced by our new interest in man as an individual. This is a development which is not really a development of the old philosophy. We do not associate ourselves with the meaning of the songs used by the Bauls. For instance, to Chandidas's famous line " Sabar upare manus satya " (man is the truth above all) the Bauls attach a meaning to it which we do not attach. The word '*manus*' simply does not mean 'man' as we understand from our Western education. There is nothing wrong about it, but the point is that the Bauls look upon man as the symbol of *atma* (soul). '*Manus*' does not stand for—according to the Greek sense or according to Western ideas—simply man. So we have to re-interpret the word according to our old philosophy. It is certainly a comparable meaning but that comparable meaning is given today because of our newer contact with the West which is a point which I would very humbly place before you. In this connection let me also place before you a criticism of the usual doctrine which is placed before our readers that Rabindranath was a true development of Indian spirit. He was undoubtedly also a logical development of one element supplied by Western contact. Therefore a completely new meaning was given to things or words which have an old history. This is one of the developments which has taken place. Though modified to a

great extent, our old philosophies have been incorporated and reinterpreted at the present time.

Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay: I would request Sj. Suresh Chakrabarty to give us an idea as to whether there has been any change in the Baul tunes since the old days.

Sj. Suresh Chakrabarty: We have no notation of old songs and therefore it cannot be said what has actually taken place. But I shall say something afterwards.

Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay: I should like to associate myself with Prof. Nirmal Bose when he says that re-interpretation of ancient ideas has taken place. This has in fact occurred again and again under similar circumstances. In the old Vedanta philosophy it was held that all men were equal. This applied to the limited society in which the philosophers lived. In the Yoga philosophy it is said that Sadhana should be in all places and times and apply to all people. In Vedanta philosophy the worshipper who had attained a certain level of self realisation said "I am He" '*Soham asmi*'. At the same time there was domination by the higher caste group of Brahmin and Kshatriya. The Sudra and Nisada were largely pushed down. With Muslim conquest, Muslim cultural ideas spread. Among its common preachers, there was the preaching of equality. The domination of the upper social group was removed to a certain extent as a result of this new factor. Since suppression generates emotional tension and one of the modes of expression of emotional tension is through poetry, this feeling of tension now released among these older depressed classes gave rise to poets in different parts of India. Poets like Dadu, Rabidas, Kabir and others enriched our folk poetical literature in this way. Many of them came from what are termed lowcastes. As I have discussed in an earlier paper, a reinterpretation of the old philosophy was necessary.*

This reinterpretation was in terms of the old Yoga philosophy which spoke of the nine doors of the human body and stated that the human body was the seat of the Divinity. Whatever the caste, the mediaeval reinterpretation stated the body as the seat of the Lord, was pure. But with the impact of Western education a further re-interpretation

* Conflict and Social behaviour by K. P. Chattopadhyay: S. C. Ray memorial volume 1940.

in terms of modern humanism took place, and as a result we have had this new interpretation which Sri Nirmal Kumar Bose has placed before you. Culture contact often places an old truth or fact in a new facet, reveals a new significance. This is in a sense development of the old outlook, absorbing and fusing with the new element.

We shall now proceed with the next item, namely, *Changes in Traditional music* on which Sri Rajyeswar Mitra will read his paper. Sri Mitra is a musician and author. He has written two volumes on music in Bengal. His talk will be illustrated by some songs recorded earlier, in our Departmental taperecorder by me.

CHANGES IN TRADITIONAL MUSIC

SRI RAJYESWAR MITRA

Ladies and gentlemen, the music of Bengal is singular in that through the ages it has never been intricately technical nor abstract, but it has given vent to human feelings in a plain and simple way. Man stands supreme in the music of Bengal whether in the devotional or in the lyrical or folk compositions. Bengal adopted the North Indian system but only in so far as the form is concerned, and other developments of the Raga style or rather Darbari style was not favoured by this country. It may be that the Hindusthani or Darbari style did not prosper due to lack of State patronage during the middle ages which resulted in the development of the peoples' music in the rural areas. But a more convincing explanation appears to be that the liking of the people was not in the weaving of the Raga music in the Hindusthani classical way but in shaping music in an objective fashion so as to retain its entertainment value. That is how the old Dance dramas were created and the long ballads on the achievements of the secular deities grew.

It was Joydeva who in the decadent Hindu period in Bengal conceived a romantic form in his Dance drama Gitagovinda which was written in very simple Sanskrit. This composition was a departure from the rigid classical style. Its extreme romantic theme, its beauty and rhythm was so charming that it exerted enormous influence on the lyric songs of Bengal till the eighteenth century. This influence is a positive proof that Bengal liked beauty, elegance, and human elements more than subtle technicalities of the higher music. Another brilliant illustration of such composition in the Middle ages is found in the Srikrishna Kirtan which was written in Bengal and is richer in varieties than the former. It is not a composition in classical Hindusthani style. Neither is its literary finish as brilliant as that of the Gitagovinda; nevertheless it presents a peculiar blend of various forms and rhythms. It has various folk elements as well as the chaste style of the cultured section. Here again the striking feature is in the treatment of various human feelings of social life.

This special outlook is also marked in the Kirtan of the middle ages although it was pre-eminently devotional in character. Some years after the death of Srichaitanya, the chanting form of the Kirtan was supplemented by tuneful Vaishnava lyrics which embodied the poignant feelings of love. Narottam Thakur, the chief architect of this form was well versed in the classical music of Northern India, but instead of applying higher technique in these songs he chose only some modes for making a nice reconciliation between the higher form and the peculiar Bengali style. The Dhrubapada style was in full grandeur at that time in North India, and some scholars are of opinion that the old form of Kirtan bore a striking influence of the Dhrubapada; but it is very hard to confirm this assumption as in the abundant description of Kirtan in the Bengali literature its association with the Dhrubapada has never been mentioned. In fact the Dhrubapada was not a new creation but it was only a modification of the old procedure obtaining in the Prabandha songs and it was this old style that was found in the ancient prolonged and slow moving kirtan songs. However, there is much evidence to show that the Dhrubapada with all its seriousness although respected in Bengal was never sincerely accepted as the very mode was not suited to the emotional and sentimental character of this country. As a result very few Dhrubapada compositions in the Bengali language are to be found except some composed at the instance of the puritanic reformers of the nineteenth century. It may also be noted in this connection that the Dhrubapada was not so much chosen for higher art songs as for sectarian religious propaganda and it well served the purpose of the latter. Tagore, however, tried to elevate these songs and create lyric songs in the Dhrubapada style, but the outcome of his efforts can hardly be called a success inasmuch as most of his Bengali adaptations from the Hindusthani Dhrubapada were comparatively much poorer in quality, less appealing and considerably monotonous. Eventually, Tagore had to give up such experimentation. Even the old kirtan which was rather slow moving and somewhat heavy was not liked by the people and had to be remodelled to make it more lively and rhythmic.

These characteristics of the Bengali songs are to be found till the end of the eighteenth century when further modifications came into being. The intense feelings of life found expression in a new form called the Tappa which was enthusiastically introduced by Ramnidhi Gupta better known as Nidhu Babu. The Tappa came to Bengal

from North India but it is considerably different from its original mode. This change was very studied and in keeping with the sentiment of the people. In the Bengali Tappa the vocal undulation from note to note is extremely touching and suggestive which is not found in the North Indian form. This will be made clear by an illustration. The tune of .

O mia be janewale (Punjabi Tappa)

The Bengalee song begins thus (in the same tune)

Tomāri tulanā tumi prān (Bengali) etc.

The English version of the Bengali Tappa is as follows :—

My love, you can only be compared with your own self.
Even the full moon of the firmament regrets its dark spots.
In beauty and dignity who will bear your likeness :
Every element of yours emanates from yourself,
Just as Ganga can be worshipped by her water alone.

(Illustrated from record on tape-recorder.)

This Tappa on account of its tenderness became so popular that it was mingled with various types of songs even in folk music.

As a result some types of folk songs attained the characteristics of art songs, but also perfectly retained the charm of folk music. This was manifest in the Pāñchālī and Kathakatā in which the religious mythologies were lucidly unfolded with songs with a view to educate the masses ethically and culturally. The result was very pleasing. An illustration from the composition of Dasarathi Roy, a celebrated Panchali composer of the 19th century is cited to show this influence of Tappa in folk songs.

(Ogo sajani, Rai anga sājābo diye ki bhusan)
(Dasarathi Roy)

The English version of the song is as follows :—

O Sajani, how can I adorn the body of Radha?
Her beauty has surpassed the beauty of the full moon.
Radha is the best jewel among women and no other jewel
is enough to decorate her,

Her ornament is the Lord Himself whom the ascetics try
 to find in meditation,
 Is the golden necklace enough for her whose colour cannot
 be expressed by all colourful expression?
 And whose beauty carries away even the hearts of the Yogis.
 (Illustrated on tape-recorder)

Gradually however, some amount of vulgarity spoiled the beauty of the original songs and a puritanic movement vehemently suppressed these songs. This suppression was rather ruthless and failed to distinguish between the really worthy and the vulgar compositions. As a result the Tappa songs were boycotted as a whole and the most delicate songs of the 19th century are nearly lost due to this reformist zeal. But the irony of this puritanic movement is that the reformists themselves were influenced by the Tappa and various religious songs were composed in this style. Nevertheless the "infamous" tradition of the Tappa love songs remained for ever. The later intellectual of the 19th century drew a good deal from the original Tappa style but their compositions have been carefully reformed and look artificial compared to the original ones. These have been considerably chastened and made suitable to the taste highly cultured by the (Victorian) English education.

Another aspect of the 19th century music is the development of the dramatic songs. Here again, a style was adopted which was very much disliked as vulgar by the elites. This form is known as the Khemta which was the traditional style of the Nautch girls. This form was most effective so far as dramatic appeal was concerned and like the Tappa, some peculiar sentiments of love, separation, as well as joy, could be beautifully expressed by it. The famous composition of Gopal Urey and of Girish Chandra Ghosh, the dramatist may be cited as illustrations. (Oi dekhā jāi bāri āmār, chār dike mālancha berā) (Gopal Urey). English Version :—

There stands my cottage among the bowers where the
 cuckoos sing and the bees hum,

Bhramaras are happily playing with the Bhramaris and in
 my garden the spring is everlasting.

(Chāo chāo mukh dhekonā sharam sabenā) (Girish Chandra).

English version :—

Look at me, do not cover your face, I cannot brook your
bashfulness,
Depict my face in your eyes, otherwise the union will not
be complete,
Let the sentiments arising in our minds be studied by your
beautiful face,
And let us glance at each other.
If the eyes do not meet how can we catch what the soul
speaks?

(Illustrated on tape-recorder).

Probably the delicate sentiments of the songs could not be expressed in any other form than this.

Soon however, these unsophisticated songs were replaced by the more chaste and literary compositions of the intellectuals who rose towards the later half of the 19th century and gradually the section adhering to the traditional style dwindled into insignificance having been totally ignored by the cultured and educated class. It cannot be denied that this later music became somewhat artificial in spite of its becoming much more elevated. In fact, it lost the initial universal appeal of the Tappa songs which were accepted by all, high as well as low.

The beginning of the present century was marked by the attempt of refining the lyric songs as far as practicable. Tagore stood supreme in brilliance, beauty and elegance. D. L. Roy found impetus from the western music and instilled a force hitherto unknown. Atulprasad Sen was very successful in composing extremely melodious songs influenced by *gazel* tunes. The music of Bengal attained a graceful and intellectual form which was somewhat higher for the common people. As a result another change became necessary after the first two decades of this century when music began to spread through the gramophone records among all classes of people and demands became varied in character. An endeavour was made to compose songs suited to different tastes and Kazi Nazrul Islam was very successful in producing variety in our songs. The creation for the deeper minds was also not very much restricted and Dilip Kumar Roy is one of the foremost intellectual composers of the modern Bengal. Mention may also be made of

Himanshu Kumar Dutta who was extremely psychological and delineated some sad tunes by his charming and delicate glides.

Since the last war the course of music in Bengal has suffered a change which is unusual in many respects. Music was so long treated as a plain art, but now the struggle of life also left a mark on it. Tales of privation, frustration, shattered hopes, woes of homeless life—all have found expression through music and the realistic songs which were boldly conceived by Salil Choudhury and others a few years back are new in the music of Bengal. An effort has been made to introduce harmony in these compositions, and the endeavour though rudimentary in nature is nevertheless somewhat striking and original. It should however be mentioned that such compositions are getting morbidly monotonous and it requires a great talent to produce descriptive songs of this nature to retain their liveliness and artistic spirit. As regards other songs the success has not been achieved so much as literary as well as musical qualities have not attained the expected standard. During the last century creations were spontaneous and depicted the true feeling, but in the present age the lyrics appear to be artificial and written with the sole object of making something new. Unfortunately the businessmen who have almost monopolised the music now-a-days are encouraging the composers to make rather cheap appeal of love in their songs with a view to extending the scope of sale of records of songs in Cinema pictures, and it is regrettable that our composers are not able to forego the liberal offers that are made to them.

The progress is however going on and one remarkable feature is that the composers are trying to cast off the influence of the erstwhile great composers but in their new pursuits they are trying to retain what is best in the previous compositions. The success may not be great but the endeavour is going on steadily. This age is an age of experimentations, and the same old social outlook is present in these creations too. Bengal is still trying to find a new way in making the compositions really artistic but not altogether subjective and full of imagery.

I would like to hear the opinion of Mr. Suresh Chakrabarty as regards composers of dhrubapad.

Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay : I shall ask him later. I am declaring a few minutes' recess, and then I shall call upon our friends to discuss

this paper. Sri Chakrabarty will specially come and help us in the discussion of music, because most of us who are anthropologists will not be able to discuss the technical aspects of this department of culture.

(At this stage there was a short recess for tea)

Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay : We shall now resume our discussion.

Sj. Suresh Chakrabarty : It is very difficult to speak on the changes in classical music. We have found from the paper that has been just read—though the reader confined himself to the boundaries of Bengal—that this is a very big question. Even in this limited scope of the paper he has dealt with the different changes that have taken place, in the classical music. We must give credit to Mr. Mitra for touching so many points in his short paper. Our difficulty is that we do not know in what tune our forefathers used to sing. We had Caryapada, Gitagovinda, Srikrishna Kirtans etc. Narottam Thakur gave us one form of music called Garanhati. However, I would like to confine myself to the paper itself. In the Gitagovinda altogether there are 24 songs which were sung in twelve different ragas and in five talas. We also find it stated that the Gitagovinda used to be sung in one tune sometimes. I do not know how far this is true. We know that in some places Gitagovinda used to be sung throughout the whole night : This method of singing was called 'Jagar'. This method of composing songs in traditional ragas was followed even upto the day of Srikrishna Kirtan. All the ragas that are used to sing Gitagovinda are found in Srikrishna Kirtan—even more ragas are found in the latter book. Narottam Thakur introduced the famous songs in Khetri called Garanhati. We hear that he was well versed in Dhrupad. The other forms of Kirtans are Reneti and Monoharsahi. Narottam, Shamananda and Srinivas went to Brindaban to Sriji Goswami to study Vaisnava philosophy so that on coming back they could preach Vaisnavism here properly. During their stay in Brindaban they learnt Dhrupad from some prominent musicians belonging to the Mogul Court of Jahangir. When they came back they were practically Dhrupadiyas. They were bringing some books with them and on their way to Bengal they were robbed of their books by a king named Bir Hambir of Vishnupur. The contents of the books were not committed to memory by them and they thought that some new device should be found out to preach the cult of Vaisnavism and this device was kirtan. They practically sang kirtans in Dhrupad style. But whether the great Kirtanias of today

sing Kirtans in the style of Narottam Thakur we cannot say definitely. But if you read the accounts of the Khetari festival you will find that at first something else was sung, namely *alap* of a particular *rag*. When the particular *rag* was established, the actual singing started. That is also the rule of singing dhrupad. Now-a-days instead of *alap* we hear *apattan*. The result is that when a *Kirtan* song is to be sung, the singer will say "I will sing one *kirtan* of *doshkosi* or *lofa*. Thus he introduces the song in the name of *tal* (timing) and not in that of a *raga*. It is therefore evident that they have practically forgotten *ragas*. It is not a particular pattern of music or particular composition, but it has always been the practice in Bengal to accept whatever is available from outside and adapt it according to her own taste. Just as in the case of *tappa*, what Bengal has accepted is not the original *tappa* at all. The original was much more quick than the Bengali *tappa*. We find that whenever Bengal takes something from outside it gives a different shape not thoroughly ignoring the *ragas*. For instance, I can give you a very small instance. The *raga* of this song is *desh*, but here there is some peculiarity in its expression (Sings). As soon as we stop at *Re*, it is *desh* (Sings). We stop at *Re* not from above but from below. No Hindusthani musician will allow this, and no Bengali musician will do otherwise.

One other important thing is that our *jatra* songs are sometimes compared to Ramlila of North India. You will find that Ramlila songs are more or less folk songs. But in our *jatra* the principal songs are all sung in *ragas*. Now in *jatra* you do not think of urban life. Now-a-days there is no *jatra* in the villages. Even thirty years ago there was not a single village where *jatra* parties did not go.

Then we find that in spite of the fact that in all other parts, the folk song is mostly composed of not more than five notes, no folk song in Bengal is composed of less than seven notes. It is in Bengal only and not in any other province in India where you find that all the notes of the gamut are freely used in folk songs. This is so even in the most fundamental of folk songs known as *bhatiali*. If I draw a link between this *bhatiali* which is pure and simple, a folk type, with what they say about Bengal *tappa* we find very significant things. In *tappa* you will see that groups of syllables are uttered together, and between these groups a long gap is left. This long gap is filled by *tan* in case of *tappa* and a monotone in case of a *bhatiali*. For instance, the song which Mr. Mitra sang, namely, "oi dekha jai bari amar . . ." I have

heard it sung in another way. It is sung in this way. (Sings). Long gaps are filled by *tan*. There are different types of *bhatiali* such as a song sung by the cowherd or a song sung by boatmen. There is a third type, namely, a song sung by people who graze only buffaloes. "*Ore mos rākho, mosāl bhāiṇya re surmā nadir kule*". "Oh brother buffaloherder, stop your herds on the bank of river Surma". This is sung in a difficult tune. There may not be much rhythm in it and you cannot expect rhythm in an occupation which does not lend itself to rhythm. Suppose a boatman is sitting at the helm of the boat, he is simply holding the oar and the boat is going with the help of the current. He is not rowing. He sings a *Bhatiali*. Similarly a cowboy takes some cattle to the field and allows the cattle to graze in the field and he lies under a tree and sings a song. This is *Bhatiali*. But the song that is sung by a dozen or two dozen boatmen while rowing is a different one. It is called *Sāri-gān*; it is perfectly rhythmic.

It has been seen by many that some Bauls sing and dance. It is not known as to why they dance at the time of singing. Of course there is rhythm in their thought and action and from this point of view it may be quite in order. There are similarities, between *Sarigān* and songs sung by people who work on the roof. They sing while beating the roof. There should be researches to see what is the link between a *Bhatiali* and these other forms of songs. It is an important point. Because the melody alone does not satisfy us. We must look to the rhythm also.

Regarding the modern trend in our music we find that there are two aspects of it. One is the physical aspect, *i.e.*, the shapes of ragas in terms of notes—and the other aspect is the particular idea which a particular raga expresses. Bengalis generally favour the second aspect. Tagore's song "*sammukhe sānti pārābar*", "The pool of peace lies in front" is sung in *Purabi*, which is a very popular *raga*. This is a song which should not be sung in any other *raga*. But the *Purabi* of Tagore does not actually conform to the notes peculiar to that *raga*. There are such peculiarities in *Bhairabi*, in *Behag*, *Kalengra* etc. Another thing will also be noticed that in modern songs we deviate from the accepted rules of ragas. The reason may be that the composers perhaps are not versed in ragas. The results have been very discouraging to us as their products do not last long. The result is that you find that a melody which was once accepted as reasonable and practical has gone out of fashion. Instances of this are many. It

is somewhat like having a new pattern more or less not based on policy but on a personal compromise. For instance, when Sri Promothesh Barua used a punjabi with a collar, the youngmen of Calcutta imitated him, and we found youngmen having punjabis with collars. When such punjabis were torn through use, tailors did not make any more punjabis of the same description. Musicians not knowing ragas were satisfied with having some notions which were known to be of any particular patterns, but having no idea about the pattern itself. During the last 20 years however there have been changes. The change is that songs are becoming more and more reasonable in their structure. Nowadays some find cinema songs modern. I do not know how long that type will last. We do not know what is coming in the future. Let us hope that new thoughts will grow. We are really not fed up with Dhrupad or Kheyal, but will certainly welcome any new form of music. In order to give an opportunity of conceiving of a new form, about 20 years ago I introduced in the All-India Radio a new type called *Ragapradhan* Music. It is a song conforming to a Raga but not in the form of dhrupad or kheyal.

Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay: It is really a technical subject, and we are thankful to have had the advantage of the knowledge and experience of Sri Suresh Chandra Chakrabarty. If any other member present here would like to say something, he can do so. (Nobody stood up).

Then we shall proceed to the next item, namely, the paper on "Changes in Santal songs".

CHANGES IN SANTAL SONGS

PROF. K. P. CHATTOPADHYAY

At the earlier conference held on 20th February, 1956, it was stated that tribal villages had for a long time been subject to Hindu influence and many traits had been borrowed and assimilated long ago. It was also pointed out that the opening up of roads and more intensive contact in recent times due to economic changes brought about by modern industrial conditions had accelerated such borrowing and also introduced other changes of a different kind. An examination of Santal songs also reveals such earlier as well as recent changes. I should note here that Santal songs may roughly be classified under (1) Religious songs sung at socio-religious festivals like Baha Porob, (2) secular songs sung at ceremonies like marriage, (3) songs sung at dances, without any special occasion, (4) Bir Seren or forest songs. The changes are observed in certain kinds only of these songs. I shall indicate the trends of such changes under three heads.

(a) Changes in structure of the tune; I hope the musicians will excuse my using a non-technical term, because I am not a technician in that respect.

It is well known that classical songs in our country are often preceded by a singing of the tune without the words of the song, using only a few conventional syllables without sense. This is referred to as Telena. In a number of Santal songs sung on secular occasions this type of preamble to the tune proper occurs. The actual words of such a song supposed to be sung by a woman while weeding fields are noted below. It will also be reproduced on the record that will be played.

Tāhāra Tāhāre tā nānā
Tārānā Tāhāre Tāhāre
Nāyogo naretālār norāk' tin do
Nayogo kedār tala duar tin do
Nayogo Juminange duktin do
Nayogo Juminange bipad tingo

Nayogo gutikorāe hālān lidin
 Nayogo Karmikuri natan lidin
 Nayogo Yuminange duk tin
 Nayogo sahet sakam panotom
 Nayogo cirbabar tonotol
 Nayogo khuntul cetanre dohokedindo
 Nayogo jumnange duktin do
 Nayogo tijangae raputkidin
 Nayogo cherdale potockidin
 Nayogo talabrohmare khanjokidin do

(Tape record No. V played.)

A girl who is doing this work complains in song.

English Version :—

Oh mother, under the creeper away from the house
 Oh mother, away from the door
 Oh mother, the land gives me pain
 Oh mother, the field is full of danger
 Oh mother, the worker lad seizes me
 Oh mother etc.

The above is a translation of the first few lines of the song apart from the preamble which does not need a translation. It has been recorded as sung by actual Santals with their musical instruments—their drums, their stringed instruments, etc., on the wire by me. A detailed translation is not necessary.

(b) Changes in structure of what may be termed the song program :—This is illustrated by the singing of a special introductory song before commencing other songs. It is a regular feature of song and dance on secular occasions. This introductory song is as follows :—

Bhāero re bhāero
 Chitā Kāpra bhaero
 Bhāero re bhāero
 Hisi Dumuni bhāero
 Dhoromero Ākhāra
 Isorero māndewa
 Gupi Kānhāi nate jorale

English Translation :—

Come out, oh come out
Chita and Kapra, come
Hisi and Dumuni, come
The dancing shed of Isar
Kanhai of Gopis has called us to dance.

The names of the girls are of the ancestral sisters, who were daughters of Pilcu Haram and Pilcu budhi. The Hindu influence is unmistakable in the content of the succeeding verses of the song.

(Record XI—Sung in Lagre Jhika)

(c) Changes in the content of the song under Hindu influence is far more evident in the songs known as Dasae Seren, sung at the time of Durga Puja formerly :—

(Record VIII)

Hāere, hāere, hāere
Dibire Durgā dokin norokenāre
Dibire Durgā dokin baherenāre
Bel buṭarekin norokenāre
Aorā koṛārekin baherenāre
Tete lagit dokin norokenāre
Tete lagit dokin bahirenāre
Sunum sindur lagitkin norokenare
Āenom kājal lagitkin bahirenāre
Des rege guruho sunum sindur do
Disom rege guruho āenom kājoldo

(English version)

Alas! alas! alas! Devi Durga from our house
Have we come, oh Devi Durga, away
From the house near the *bel* tree
Like orphan lads have we come away
Why have we come from our house, have we?
Why have we come out and away?
For oil and sindur have we left home
For the collyrium for eyes have we come
For our land the oil and sindur, oh guru
For our land the collyrium for eyes, oh guru.

Hindu influence is equally evident in the Lagre song (Record XII) sung at community dances :—

Ram mādol bājāe
 Kisnu gito gāwae
 Mohon murali bājāe
 Sulosae gupini jomokeba nāce goe
 Mohon Murali bājāe.

(English version)

Ram beats the madol drum, Krishna sings a melody on his enchanting flute. Sixteen hundred gopinis dance to the tune of the enchanting flute.

The songs sung at their own tribal religious festivals which have not been borrowed from Hindus, such as songs of *Baha mak more* or *Sohorāe* do not show such Hindu influence either in structure of tune or in content of song. Such changes are also not to be found in the Bir Seren of Santals, which are representatives of traditional form and tune. These *bir seren*, literally forest songs are secular songs supposed to be sung only by men. They are generally described as love songs, with a strong erotic content. This is not quite correct. A good number of these songs are love songs no doubt but others portray the sorrows and tragedies of life. I note below two songs of this class, of Bir Seren to illustrate the two types. The first is a love song. The girl is angry with her lover.

(Bir Seren record No. 2)

Ul bili hormo Bijo boe
 Soso bili korām toā do
 Noā hormo, noā hormo, tokoe lagit co ?
 Nām lagit ho bān, Sibanjā
 Nin lagit ho bān, Sibanjā
 Noā horma, noā hormo sengel lagit ge.

(English version)

(Man) ... Bijo dear, your body like a ripe mango
 Your breasts like bhela fruit as ripe;
 For whom waits this body, this body ho ?
 (Woman) . . Not for you Sibān, this body mine
 Nor for me Sibān, this body (fine)
 To the flames to burn shall I let it go.

The second song is a lament for a dead child as it is being buried by the parents—the husband is named Daso, the wife has the name Samia.

Dāso jhānti pārom te, Dāso kudi pārom me
 Dāso Dhelā butareho, Dāso khārā do lāe me.
 Samiā jhānti pāromte, Samiā kudi main pāromket,
 Samiā Dhelā butareho, Samiā khārā maiñ lāket,
 Samiā, babu nāguiem, Samiā danilan topāe.
 Dāso iñ nagnakāde, Dāso hoborākade,
 Dāso cekālekate Dāsom topogodete?
 Dāso nāmlekāge Dāso tijāngātāe,
 Dāso nāmlekage Dāso Hormotāe,
 Dāso nāmlekāge Muthan tāe,
 Dāso cekālekāte Dasom topāgodete?

(English translation)

Beyond the fence, Daso, take the hoe,
 By the Dhela tree, Daso, dig the grave.
 Beyond the fence, Samia, I have taken the hoe
 Near the Dhela tree have I dug the grave
 Bring our child to me, Samia, to be buried there.
 Here he is, Daso, my baby in my arms
 How will you, Daso, how will you cover him with earth?
 His limbs are like thine
 His face reminds me of thee
 His whole body brings your own image up before me
 How can you, Daso, how can you bury him under earth?

With the advent of modern industrial conditions, the economic changes have disrupted Santal village unity. This has been illustrated in the earlier talk by various examples from social customs and economic organisation. A new feeling of a wider unity beyond village and pargana is however emerging, probably resulting from the fact of large masses of tribal folk from different villages working together, in mines, tea gardens, factories, and probably also under influence of the national movements among their more advanced neighbours. This is illustrated in a modern song composed by a Santal musician of Mayurbhanj.

Etomte samun, konete buru
 Singe disom tābon, adi juta
 Oḱto jani rimir sermāte rākāpa
 Disom para jaṛia jonomo gelea.

To the right the sea, to the left the mountain
 This Sing land of ours is of great beauty
 An ominous cloud in the sky arose
 It rained in the countryside and hurt life

The reference is to a calamity which struck them. The sentiment of sorrow at distress in the land where they lived is comparable to similar sentiments about sufferings in one's country among their neighbours, in similar conditions.

(Record XVII played on the tape)

Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay: Is there anybody who wants to offer any comments?

(Nobody stood up).

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RESOLUTIONS

Before we conclude our session, I would like to mention certain questions which the UNESCO authorities, who sponsored this conference, would like us to answer. I have prepared a draft answer and I would like to have your views on the same. The UNESCO authorities have asked us :—

- (1) How is the traditional culture (especially the arts, literature and philosophical thought) of the community being affected by recent social changes and new intellectual interests?
- (2) What is the role of the university in those cultural activities? Are the educators aware of new needs or demands with which the university is faced, both in its own community life (among teachers and students) and in its relations to the larger society in which the university participates?
- (3) What resources has the university for developing organised cultural activities for the benefit of the community in addition to its regular academic courses and studies : such as, musical and dramatic performances, lectures, forums, reading and discussion groups, exhibitions, cinemas, radio broadcasts?
- (4) Is there a nucleus of competent persons within the university for the promotion of such activities and of the general cultural participation of the community?
- (5) What are the most important and urgent needs requiring action (a) at the local level, (b) at the national level and (c) through an international agency :
- (6) How can the existing resources of personnel and material be utilised for continuing studies and discussions and undertaking practical measures for making the community aware of the problem involved and their possible solutions?

I shall now place before you the note I have prepared and I shall send it also to those of my friends who have taken an active part in the discussion for their opinion for amendments needed if any.

You have listened at the first conference to the report on Village Patterns by Sri Nirmal Bose and learnt therefrom how the old village

unity has been shattered. From the paper on Changes in Tribal Villages, and the discussions which followed, you no doubt appreciated the considerable weakening and partial disruption of the community feeling in tribal villages. The factors responsible for these changes were also discussed. From the discourses we had yesterday on Folk Toys and Folk Crafts and today on Folk Music, it is clear that similar factors have led to changes in these departments of culture, although in different manner. Some of the arts are dying, but attempts at revival are apparent in certain cases. From the discussions in the first conference, it is clear that there have been trends towards a larger unity of the community. These have so far been limited to an occasional large scale effort in an emergency or a regular annual function. But these facts indicate socio-economic trends. Nascent organisations are developing, based on such trends. The beginnings of such developments may be traced several decades ago and they received a big impetus from the countrywide tour and attempt to reorganise on improved lines our village crafts by Gandhiji, along with his political messages. In the industrial area, the big trade union organisation born in 1921 played a similar role. Opinions may differ about the mode of activity preached by different political groups. But they reveal the attempt on their part to give expression to the aspirations and the discontent of the workers in fields, factories and elsewhere. How far they succeeded in doing so, or to what extent they were able rightly to indicate the path to be followed, is not within the ambit of this conference. We may try to indicate on the basis of data available, the possible lines for rehabilitation of the craftsmen and revival of certain arts and crafts and also how far the traditional culture can fit in with the modern conditions in our country and in the world at large. This is the second question put by the UNESCO department of cultural activities to us in the University and co-operating organisations. There is a third question with regard to which we note that :—

- (a) the Department of Psychology has been working for many years on problems of Applied Psychology and have a special section for such work;
- (b) the Department of Anthropology has carried out surveys of peasantry, industrial workers, middle class students in colleges and of tribal folk. Juvenile delinquency is also a subject of research by this department;

- (c) the Department of Geography has studied land systems in our delta with a view to help planning;
- (d) the Department of Economics is now engaged on a study of urbanisation;
- (e) the Department of Fine Arts and the Asutosh Museum has collected valuable data regarding folk art;
- (f) the Department of Statistics has collaborated by furnishing technical help in various surveys;
- (g) the Department of Students' Welfare has collaborated in organisation of Students' camp for village welfare work and for participation of students in community development projects.

It is therefore evident that some at least of the University staff are aware of new needs or demands with which the University is faced both in its orbit and in relation to society at large.

- (3) The resources of the University are extremely limited. The different surveys except that for students—were all conducted with the help of Government grants received directly or indirectly through some other semi-corporate body. The social welfare camps are also financed by a Government grant from the Centre. The Day Homes for study to be organised on the basis of recommendations made as a result of the survey of students are also being financed by the Central Government.
- (4) Evidently, as such work has been conducted by the University there is a nucleus of competent persons within the University for promotion of such activities and of the general cultural participation of the community. The teachers of affiliated colleges and other organisations have co-operated in these matters and they may be looked upon as Associate members of the University. It may be noted that most of them send elected representatives to the Senate of the University.
- (5) The most important need, on the side of the University, in this matter, is to have more data collected and thereafter suggestions framed for plans of rehabilitation. Money grants are needed for such research work.

- (6) The existing personnel can organise such research work and suggest means for solution of outstanding problems. They can make the community aware of the problems and their possible solutions by scientific publications, popular articles, extra-academic lectures, and by conferences held in collaboration with other cultural organisations."

There was general acceptance of the note, subject to the note being sent to some of the important participants for their further suggestions, if any.

Prof. K. P. Chattopadhyay : Before I conclude the session I must convey our thanks to the Institute of Jute Technology for their kindness in placing this hall at our disposal and also for helping us to offer a little refreshment—it has come from their canteen—and also for generally helping us in other ways. I also thank the West Bengal Legislative Assembly Secretariat for deputing two Reporters to report the proceedings of this conference. I thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for your kind co-operation in this conference. All the different other organisations who have helped us also deserve our warmest thanks.

(The conference then concluded its session)

ADDENDA :—

The note was sent to Prof. Nirmal Bose, Reader in Human Geography, Mr. Ajit Mookherji, Director, Indian Institute of Arts in Industries, Prof. T. C. Das, Reader in Anthropology, Dr. N. Dattamajumdar, Director, Department of Anthropology, Government of India, and several other participants. They have signified their agreement. Dr. Dattamajumdar desires however a mention of the important effect that Community Development Projects will have in future on tribal life. Prof. Das stresses the co-operation received from University students in social welfare work through Camps.

K. P. CHATTOPADHYAY,

Convener.

27-6-57

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